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KING

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WILLIAM POND, ALIAS BILLY LEROY,
ALIAS BILLY "THE KID," THE CELEBRATED COLORADO HIGHWAYMAN.

BILLY LEROY,
THE COLORADO BANDIT;

OR,

THE KING OF AMERICAN HIGHWAYMEN!

A COMPLETE AND AUTHENTIC HISTORY OF THIS
FAMOUS YOUNG DESPERADO,

HIS CRIMES AND ADVENTURES.

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BILLY LEROY, THE COLORADO BANDIT;

OR, THE

KING OF AMERICAN HIGHWAYMEN.

CHAPTER I.

BILLY'S FIRST LESSON IN CRIME—FORCED TO SKIP FROM THE PATERNAL ROOF BETWEEN TWO DAYS—A FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE AT EIGHTEEN—BILLY FINDS HIS CAPITAL EXCEEDINGLY SMALL—CONCLUDES TO ENLARGE IT—A LONELY JAUNT—FINDS A COMPANION—THE MURDER OF JOHN HARMAR, THE DROVER.

As all the world's a stage and all the men and women players, it behooves the lookers-on to note the players who best fulfill their parts in the universal *dramatis personæ*; it behooves each discriminating spectator in his way to bear testimony to the actors on life's stage.

The particular player who is the subject of this little biography appears on the broad Western boards where art is a trifle broad and sensational, but filled with what connoisseurs term native vigor.

The reader will observe, as this thrilling drama of outlaw life unfolds itself, that the unities which make up the drama of the mimic stage are not observed, but in revenge the probabilities are in no way sacrificed to stage carpentering, blank cartridges, blue and red fire and all the other little illusions that stir up the blood of the "gods" and thrill their sensation-loving souls with horror and delight.

The "star" actor in our drama was born in Indianapolis, Ind., like all distinguished men, of "poor but honest parents." His early life was passed in the quiet, easy-going way peculiar to all American boys.

At ten years of age he began to give evidences of a devil in his

nature quite as large as the average run of woodchucks. He was the leader in all raids on neighboring hen-roosts and orchards, and never hesitated to pull off his coat to whip any presumptuous urchin who was disposed to dispute his right to be considered as the ring-leader in schemes where "pure cussedness" and audacity were the essentials to a successful prosecution.

His exploits as an embryo outlaw soon made him the terror of the neighborhood in which he resided, and caused the residents to wish that it was in the grand scheme of creation that he be taken to glory to shine as a juvenile angel, or that the law would consign him to quarters where the State guarantees free board and clothes for a certain period of time.

But in these uncharitable designs his neighbors were doomed to disappointment. The devil, it is affirmed, takes care of his own, and Arthur Pond, *alias* Billy, the Kid, was recognized by his cloven-footed, long-tailed majesty as a very promising lieutenant, who, as he progressed in life, would certainly be an effective aid in working out his scheme to gather mankind into Hades.

Old Nick's perception is seldom at fault. Billy rapidly developed his wicked propensities, and from juvenile pilfering rackets soon rose to the grade of a full-fledged thief. Indianapolis became many degrees above blood-heat too warm for him, and when a hard-hearted blue-coat came to his residence one evening for the purpose of placing him in durance vile, he leaped from the second-story window and went out into the wide world, a fugitive from justice, with ambition in his soul to be the King of American Bandits.

Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard and Claude Duval had left immortal fame behind them as robbers, but Billy, with characteristic American determination, resolved to throw their exploits so far in the shade that admirers of those worthies would be compelled to confess that they were "carpet knights" compared with him.

When he set out on his forced flight his worldly possessions consisted of a seven-shooter and a very much dilapidated fifty-cent shin-plaster. Before daybreak he had left the Hoosier capital far behind him. Out in the country in the midst of the green fields and broad wood lands the outlaw aspirations thrilled his soul with delight. He felt the freedom which the paved streets and brick and stone buildings of the city can not give.



BILLY'S DEBUT AS A FEMALE IMPERSONATOR.



He lost no time in putting distance between him and his native city, and when night came on was many miles toward the land of the setting sun.

As the sun sank to rest and the shades of night began to deepen, he began to be solicitous regarding his personal comfort.

Stopping at a farmhouse he asked for food, which was readily supplied. In the matter of lodging he was not so successful. His kind-hearted hosts were so numerous that travelers would be obliged to sleep on the roof, bed-room was so scarce.

Small things, philosophers tell us, often shape the current of our lives. However this may be, certain it is that the refusal of Billy's entertainers to provide him with lodgings had a strong influence upon his.

That very night he became a highwayman in earnest, and at an age probably without precedent in the records of crime. He had just passed his eighteenth year; but this adventurer evinced a daring and recklessness rarely equalled in hardened criminals, and would have indeed made Jack Sheppard proud of him as a compatriot.

Four miles distant to the westward from the farmhouse where he had obtained his supper was a large tract of woodland, through which ran a road leading to the village of H., a market place for the farmers of the surrounding country as well as a stopping-place for drovers on their way to Chicago and New York.

Several large cattle pens stood a short distance from the railroad which skirted the town on the south, and this accommodation induced drovers to make the town their headquarters.

At a convenient distance from the pens stood a little hotel, whose successive occupants for a long course of years had dispensed the good things of life to all who stopped under its roof. It was in high repute among drovers especially, who, travelling to the great markets for the sale of their cattle, and returning with well-lined purses, always met a cordial reception from the jolly host of the "Bull's Head," a name which he had given his tavern in deference to the occupation of a majority of his patrons.

Journeying towards this hotel on the same road and in the same direction which Billy was travelling was a wealthy drover named John Harmar. He had left H—— in the morning to take a run over the country in search of choice live stock, and now, at the close of the day, was

making his way back. He had a large sum of money with him, and felt desirous of reaching the village while the moon shone and rendered travelling comparatively easy. The atmosphere was beautifully clear; the grass, the hedges, the trees, the very road sparkled with hoar frost that seemed to reflect, as in unnumbered mirrors, the bright beams of the moon and the glittering rays of the twinkling stars. Although Harmar had travelled all day, weariness did not oppress him, but his step was as elastic and his eyes as sprightly as when he rose from his morning slumbers to commence the labors of the day. For two hours he had been travelling direct for the village, and yet a long distance still lay before him. As he neared the woodland, a strange and, undefined sensation crept over his mind; horrid tales of highway robbers and midnight assassins rose upon his mind, and though good fortune had so far spared him the displeasure of such an encounter, still he believed that it might be his turn yet.

And his belief was destined to have a realization sooner than he had any idea of. Refreshed by his repast at the farm-house, Billy, the Kid, started on his tramp westward inspired by two objects: The desire to put as much distance as possible between himself and capture by the Hoosier authorities, and to secure a place where he could rest his weary bones.

As he trudged along the thought occurred to him that his capital was exceedingly small. He was keen enough in worldly affairs, boy though he was, to know that mankind in general, and landlords in particular, were not very hospitable when money was scarce. The tattered shinplaster in his pocket was all he had to evoke a welcome from any landlord.

He must have money!

But how was he to get it? was the question that flashed across his mind. As quickly, the idea suggested itself to rob somebody. He had had one successful experiment, and it piqued the outlaw element in his nature to try again. While deliberating whether he would try his hand as a burglar on some of the farm mansions that lay along his route, he overtook John Harmar.

"Hello, youngster," was the salutation of the drover, as he turned to see who was following him. "Which way are you travelling at this hour of night?"

"It looks as if I was travelling in the same direction as yourself,"

A SCENE IN A LEADVILLE THEATRE.





replied Billy, facetiously. "I'm bound for H——; how far is it from here?"

"About five miles," was the reply. "I'm trying to get there myself. Glad you came along. I was kinder dreading the tramp alone through the woodland tract ahead. It's a dismal kind of a place for a feller to be in alone in the night."

The drover was a shrewd observer of men and during the few minutes that the two had been together he had taken stock thoroughly of his companion.

The handsome, boyish face of Billy completely disarmed any suspicion that he might have had regarding him. In the bright moonlight he could see that he was only a boy, although his muscular, closely-knit frame betokened the man.

"What part of the country do you hail from, my lad?" questioned the drover, "and how comes it that you are travelling alone?"

"I have been living on a farm near Chicago," Billy replied, "and am tramping through the country in search of work. I stopped a few miles back at a farmer's house in hopes to get a night's lodging. But he couldn't accommodate me, so I concluded to journey along to H—— and put up at the hotel there."

His frank, honest manner made the drover confidential, and ere the woodland was reached Billy knew all about his business.

And he had also made up his mind that John Harmar was possessed of money. Men who went around the country buying cattle didn't travel with empty pockets, he reasoned with himself.

Here was a chance to increase his capital and make his first essay as a highwayman!

Before the pair had reached the outskirts of the woodland Billy had resolved that John Harmar would never emerge from it alive, that is, if he couldn't get his money otherwise.

Down in his coat pocket he could feel his revolver. He knew that every chamber contained a bullet, and he determined that every one should count in the game he proposed to play. The drover was a large and powerful man, and Billy knew that in a muscular contest the odds were against him.

Chatting about one thing and another, the pair soon reached the woodland. The moon shone brightly above, and yet its silvery beams could not lighten the gloom which pervaded the surroundings.

"I'm glad, young man, that you happened along," said the drover, "this is a mighty skeery place to be in alone at night, eh?"

The Kid had dropped behind his companion a couple of steps.

"Makes a feller think about ghosts and highway robbers and such things," Billy replied.

"Ghosts never trouble me much," said the drover. "Highway-men are not very plenty about here. But if one should turn up," he went on, "I guess you and I could give him a lively time."

Noticing that Billy was not alongside of him, he continued:

"Getting tired, my boy?" at the same time turning his face.

The bright barrel of a revolver glistened before his eyes.

He started back in horror, and every muscle became rigid with fear.

"Your money is what I want, my friend," said Billy, as coolly as if he had been a highwayman of long experience. "Take your choice between that and your life," he continued.

"Great God!" cried the drover, "what do you mean? are you joking?"

"Never more serious in my life," said Billy. "I want your money."

He had kept his revolver firmly in place all the time.

As quick as a flash of lightning the drover swung his heavy cattle whip about. But Billy was too quick for him. He dodged his head, and at the same time pulled the trigger of his revolver, and a bullet entered the drover's breast. In the twinkle of an eye Harmar was upon him, and the forms of both close intertwined like two serpents in deadly strife. Each strove to gain the upper hand, but so swift were their involutions that neither retained the advantage for a moment.

As they tugged and strained at each other Billy could feel the warm life current of his opponent trickling down over his arms, and he knew that the struggle would end in his favor. Manfully the drover battled for his life, and when victory seemed almost in his grasp, his strength began to fail him. The Kid could feel the heaving and throbbing breast against his own, and it spurred him to greater action.

"God have mercy on me," exclaimed the drover, relaxing his grasp and falling back in the middle of the road.

He never spoke again. A few convulsive shudders, and John Harmar had become a thing of the past.



OFF FOR A FORAY.



Bending over him, Billy rifled his pockets, and then started on a run towards the west.

The shrill cry of a night bird caused him to stop ere he reached the clearing and stand motionless in the center of the road.

It seemed to shriek "beware" in his ears. He started back with horror, his frame trembling like an aspen leaf.

Again the cry smote his ears, and then he bounded off like a deer, his hands pressed on his ears to shut off the sound of what seemed to him a curse of vengeance.

That weird cry was also poor John Harmar's requiem.

CHAPTER II.

BILLY, THE KID'S, FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE AS A FEMALE IMPERSONATOR—MAY VIVIAN, A BEAUTIFUL VARIETY ACTRESS, STIRS UP A LITTLE STRIFE IN THE GREEN-ROOM—DEAD-SHOT CHARLEY'S JEALOUSY—HOW BILLY SURPRISED HIS RIVAL—THE BALL—DEAD-SHOT CHARLEY FINDS A TOOL IN HIS GAME OF LOVE—THE HOOSIER SHERIFF'S LAST ARREST—A REVEL TURNED INTO A ROUT.

The next scene in our drama shifts to Leadville, the bustling, wide-awake city of gold and fortune hunters.

It is night, and the mad chase for wealth in which its inhabitants are all engaged has ceased for a few hours, and pleasure reigns instead of Mammon.

From the many saloons and places of amusement comes the sound of music and revelry. The clinking of glasses blend with the laughter of the revelers, and wassail and debauchery rules the hour.

Passing down one of the main streets we come to a large concert saloon, whose pretentious appearance proclaims it to be above its fellows as a temple of pleasure.

The large bill-board in front tells us that every artist who appears to-night is world-renowned, and that they have been specially engaged by the management for the delectation of the citizens of Leadville at an enormous outlay of money. First on the list of this wondrous array of talent comes

BILLY LEROY,

THE GREATEST FEMALE IMPERSONATOR OF THE AGE,

Whose Wonderful Performances have been the Delight and Admiration of the Leading Cities of the United States and Europe.

And that

MAY VIVIAN,

THE BEAUTIFUL AND UNRIVALLED QUEEN OF SONG,

Acknowledged to be the Greatest Ballad Singer Since Jenny Lind, will make her First Appearance in Leadville To-Night!



AN INTERRUPTED PURSUIT.



Following these two marvels of humanity came celebrated Irish comedians, unsurpassed jig dancers, marvelous contortionists, and other celebrities, all without peers in their respective lines.

Furthermore the bill announced that after the show, the floor of the hall would be cleared, and that the mammoth orchestra under the direction of the renowned Signor Monotari would discourse the bewitching melodies of Strauss, Offenbach and Lecocq for all who desired to beguile the night away in the whirl of the entrancing waltz.

And then in big, black letters, that would ravish the soul of the most conceited actor or actress, came the magical announcement :

ADMISSION FREE !

Those two words on a play bill always mean "standing room only." But discomfort is nothing when we get something without paying for it. So in we go, and are soon in the midst of the gay and reckless throng.

The vast floor is all taken up by tables, around which sit as mixed a crowd of humanity as ever came together since the building of the Tower of Babel. Swarthy, heavy-bearded miners, armed cap-a-pie with bowie knives and revolvers, sit in blissful converse with flashily-dressed syrens, whose honied tongues discourse flattery, sweet to the rude gold-digger's ear, but woefully damaging to his store of gold-dust. Opposite sits the young man from the East, who has "struck it rich" and is out for a lark. The gay damsel who puffs her cigarette between sips of champagne regards him as a "tenderfoot" of the "freshest" type, and calmly bides the time when he will be ripe for the little designs she has upon his pocket-book.

Every type of humanity under the sun is gathered in the saloon, all united in one common pursuit—pleasure. Liquor flows like a miniature Niagara. Some are drunk, others are drunker; some "feel good," others "feel better." It is plain to be seen that chaos will soon come upon the crowd—and then there will be business for the undertakers and grave-diggers !

"Order, please," shouts a fat-bellied man from the stage, and comparative silence ensues. "Mr. LeRoy, the greatest Female Impersonator in the world will now oblige. Jake," he continues, addressing the "renowned Signor Monotari," play "I'm Lonely since Alphonzo Skipped."

Jake waved his baton and the orchestra played a few bars of

the ballad, and on comes "Billy LeRoy" dressed in the costume of a swell society belle. His face, circled about with blonde tresses, looked as fair and bewitching as that of a houri. The crowd yelled and clapped their hands in approval of his "make up," and as soon as their applause subsided, he began singing. As clear and as sweet as that of a prima donna his voice rang through the hall, thrilling his auditors with wonder and delight. Notes that would baffle the majority of female throats were trilled in the most bird-like manner. Every grimace and action accompanying the words of the song were executed as natural as life.

As he finished and turned to go into the wings, the audience broke into a chorus of shouts. Three encores were demanded, and rather than comply with the fourth Billy snatched the blonde wig from his head and stood revealed in his true character,

THE MIDNIGHT ASSASSIN OF JOHN HARMAR, THE DROVER!

His present business was a change that would tax the protean ability of the most versatile villain in Satan's employ, but he had made it!

God and his own conscience alone knew his horrible secret, and it was plainly evident from his manner that the latter was not troubled by it. His first experience in the bloody career he had marked out for himself had been so successful that he looked upon himself as a hero.

If the pale, blood-stained face of poor John Harmar ever rose before his mental vision in condemnation of his crime, it served only to pique his hellish vanity and inspire him with greater ambition to become the *King of American Highwaymen*.

His soul was dead to remorse. Every element of pity, respect for law, regard for life and fear of the future had gone from his nature the same moment that the drover breathed his last on the gloomy highway leading through the woodland.

As Billy entered the green-room he was met by May Vivian, the "beautiful and unrivalled queen of song." She was dressed for the stage and certainly merited the term "beautiful," if not the "unrivalled queen of song." Her shapely limbs were encased in a flesh-colored pair of tights, so life-like in hue that a near-sighted person might be pardoned for thinking that May had returned to the style of Mother Eve in the Garden of Eden. Half way down to her knees came a thin pink dress, through which one could see a fluffy maze of white

SATURDAY NIGHT IN A DENVER, COL., BARNIO.





ganze. The bodice of this abbreviated outfit matched the lower part in scantiness, and revealed a pair of shoulders and arms that would have made Venus jealous. Her face was perfect in every lineament—as fair and as beautiful as ever a poet dreamed or painter conceived.

Rushing up to Billy, she threw her arms about his neck and gave him a kiss.

"You're a daisy, Billy," she exclaimed, looking up into his face, her large black eyes sparkling with delight and admiration. "You caught the gang dead to rights, and deserved every bit of applause they gave you," she continued, giving him another rousing smack.

"Do you think so, May?" asked Billy, putting his arm about her waist and leading her to a table.

"You can bet your sweet life I do," was her reply, as she seated herself upon his lap.

"I am proud of your approval, May," said Billy. "It is worth more to me than all the rest put together. Here, waiter," he cried, "bring me a bottle of wine. We'll drink to my first appearance, May," he continued, as the waiter hurried off to attend to his order.

Among the other members of the company in the green-room passed such expressions as "a mash," "dead struck," "a spoony tenderfoot," all of which, if they reached the ears of the pair, did not disturb or annoy them.

They apparently felt that their critics, though impertinent, were not far wrong in their opinions, and lovers very rarely take offence at anybody's remarks on their actions when they are satisfied with them. Seated in a corner of the room was a handsome, finely-built man, dressed in the costume of a scout. His name appeared on the programme as

DEAD-SHOT CHARLEY,

The Most Famous Indian Scout and the Most Wonderful Sharp-Shooter of the Age. He will shoot a marble from between the thumb and forefinger of a man, taking aim from a reflection in a mirror, and performs many other feats quite as difficult and thrilling.

It would not have required very keen perceptive faculties to see that Dead-Shot Charley did not take very pleasantly to May's actions towards Billy. His keen gray eyes flashed with anger, while he nervously fingered the revolver that hung on his belt.

"Damn that simpering lar-de-dah tenderfoot," he muttered between his teeth. "If he haint careful how he spoons around May Vivian I'll have to try cold lead on him. That generally cools these Eastern mashers off about as quick as anything I know of."

"Your turn next, May," shouted the call-boy at the door of the green-room, and giving Billy a kiss she drank her goblet of wine and rushed off to the stage.

As the voluptuous beauty stepped before the footlights a round of tumultuous applause rang through the hall.

"She's a hummer," "a regular queen," "great snakes, ain't she a darling!" and a hundred other laudatory criticisms, more notable for force than elegance, passed between the spectators.

In the wings stood Billy, still in his female costume, watching her every movement and applauding heartily at the end of each verse.

Right behind him stood Dead-Shot Charley, his face fairly purple with suppressed anger. Jealousy had seized him and caused the lurking devil in his nature to take entire possession of him.

When May turned to the wings and smiled a recognition of Billy's applause, his fury became greater.

"You're dead struck on her, ain't you, young fellow?" he said, sneeringly.

Billy had been so interested in what was transpiring on the stage that he had not noticed the presence of the sharp-shooter.

Turning quickly, he replied in an equally sneering tone :

"Well, supposin' I am, what have you got to say about it?"

"I may have more to say about it than you'll like to hear," replied Dead-Shot Charley, placing his hand on his revolver. "That girl is mine, and I'll allow no tenderfoot rooster like you to come between us."

Ere he had finished the sentence, Billy had pulled a revolver from his dress-pocket. Springing close to his rival, he placed it under his nose before the scout had time to pull his weapon.

"Tenderfoot or toughfoot, damn you," cried Billy, "you'll find that I'm not to be bluffed or' bullied by you, sharp-shooter as you are. I can take my hand and play it, too, when shooting-irons are trumps in the game."

His transformation from the character of a female impersonator to that of knight, ready to battle for the fair singer who had enslaved



THE O'PHALLER IN BUSINESS.



his heart, was so sudden and unlooked for, that Dead-Shot Charley was paralyzed with amazement.

He was completely in Billy's power, and wisely concluded that a little diplomacy was better for him than playing the star *role* in a funeral.

"You're a mighty techy youth," he said, affecting a careless laugh. "Put up that gun of yours. Can't you take a little joke?"

"There wasn't any humorists in my family," replied Billy, coolly, still holding his revolver close to the scout's face. "We were all a mighty serious lot, and run a private cemetery on our own hook for all the funny people who came in our way."

"Well, don't count me among your dead," said Charley, smilingly, "I thought I'd try your mettle. If you want May, and she is willin', why, hitch up, and I'll dance at the weddin'. Come, let's go and liquor up before my act comes on."

Turning, he led the way to the green-room, and Billy followed feeling rather sheepish for having allowed his temper to get the better of him.

The scout had been in many tight spots before, and his experience had taught him that the man who "had the drop" in a shooting match should be conciliated if possible, even at the risk of being considered a coward.

Dead heroes, he argued, were mighty poor stock. One live man, coward though he might be, was worth a regiment of them.

He would bide his time, and wait for the trump card to fall into his hand.

He loved May Vivian madly, and was fully determined to win her for himself no matter how many lives it cost, or however desperate the game he had to play to accomplish it.

Just as the pair seated themselves at the table, the beautiful songstress came into the room.

"Come, May, join us in a bottle of wine," said Dead-Shot Charley. "We've come pretty near having a tragedy since you left us," he continued, bursting into a laugh.

"Why, what's been the trouble?" she asked, seating herself alongside of Billy.

"It was all about you, May."

"About me!" she exclaimed, "why, what have I done that you should get up a tragedy on my account?"

"Billy thought I was kicking because you were sweet on him tonight. I'll admit that I was a little jealous, May, but Billy's a good fellow, and I'm not going to quarrel if you do spoon a little with him. We've known each other too long, May, to break up over such trifles, eh?"

Unconsciously he was showing his hand again, and Billy was beginning to look upon him as a hypocrite whom it would do to watch.

"Don't make a fool of yourself," said May, pettishly, "I'm going to act just as I please, whether it suits you or not."

Previous to Billy's joining the company, Dead-Shot Charley had held first place in May's affections, but the handsome face of the young Hoosier had proved more attractive to the fickle beauty than that of the scout, and he was rapidly being made to realize that he had no further charm for her.

"Waiter, where's that wine?" he called out. "Hurry it along. My motto is," he continued, turning to the pair, "that all's fair in love and war, and that a woman should have her own way in everything, except——"

"Dead-Shot Charley," sang out the call-boy, "you're wanted on the stage right away."

"Excuse me," he said to May and Billy. "Drink up the wine when it comes. I will be back shortly and open another bottle."

And picking up his rifle, he walked out to the stage.

"All's fair in love and war," repeated Billy, as the scout disappeared through the door. "I wonder if that rooster is playing a double game with me."

"He's a schemer, Billy," replied May, "and you will do well to be on your guard with him."

"It looks as if I was going to have trouble with him before our acquaintance is very old."

Appearances were not deceitful.

There was trouble in store for Billy LeRoy, although it lay some distance in the future.

And Dead-Shot Charley was destined to bear a very prominent part in it.

The olio over, the floor of the concert saloon was cleared of all the chairs and tables, except a row on each side, and the master of ceremonies sang out the command to take partners for a waltz.

MAY VIVIAN'S FIGHT WITH DETECTIVES.





The motley throng readily obeyed.

Bacchus had inspired them with the proper spirit to do homage with a vim to Terpsichore, his loyal handmaid in all scenes of revelry and debauchery.

To the merry measure of *bouffe* music the dancers went whirling about in sensuous embrace.

Prominent among the giddy crowd were Billy and May. Round and round they went, grace and precision characterizing every movement.

The beauty of the couple, combined with their graceful dancing, made them the observed of all the spectators, and compliments passed from one to another in every quarter of the room.

There were two men present on the floor who took more than a casual interest in the pair!

Standing over at the end of the hall, near the door leading into the bar-room, was a small, compactly-built man, dressed in the style of a countryman out for a holiday.

His swarthy, heavily-bearded face was shaded by a broad-brimmed slouch hat, and would have been utterly devoid of interest had it not been for his eyes, which sparkled like those of a serpent.

Not far from him stood Dead-Shot Charley, watching Billy and May intently.

His handsome face was clouded by suppressed rage. To see his inamorata in the arms of his rival, knowing as he did that she had cast him off, goaded his jealousy so sharply that he could hardly restrain the impulse to pull his revolver and become a murderer, there and then.

Moving close to where the little man was standing, he leaned up against the wall.

"That's a devilish fine couple," remarked the countryman to Charley. "They trip the light fantastic like as if they were treading on air. Wonder who they are?"

"Humph! Were you here to the performance to-night?" asked Charley.

"Yes; it was very good, too," returned the stranger.

"Well, that's Billy LeRoy, the female impersonator, and the dame's name is May Vivian, the singer," said Charley.

"How long has LeRoy been in Leadville? Where did he come from?"

The questions were asked in a careless, off-hand manner, as if prompted by mere curiosity only.

"He's been here about two weeks," replied Chanley. "Where he hails from I don't know, and don't care. He's a very fresh youth, and that's all I know of him."

"Let's walk over to this table and have a drink," said the little man.

"Thank you. Don't care if I do," and the pair seated themselves at a table close by.

"Has he been in the actor business long?" asked the stranger, after he had ordered the drinks.

"I believe he made his first appearance here," replied Charley. "Beg pardon, my friend, what causes you to ask so many questions about him? You seem to take a lively interest in the fellow."

"Can I trust you with a secret," whispered the little man, moving up close to the scout. "You strike me as an honest man," he went on, placing his hand familiarly on Charley's shoulder.

The dead-shot looked at his companion in a startled manner.

"Why, what do you mean?" he exclaimed. "Trust me with a secret! and me a perfect stranger to you! Well, you're a tenderfoot, and no mistake!"

"Don't make any mistake in me. I'm tenderfoot, I'll admit, but I've traveled a bit in my time, and can pick out a square man as readily as a ferret can scent a rat-hole."

During the delivery of this little self-praise and flattery, the tenderfoot patted Charley on the back, and winked one of his bright eyes knowingly.

"I'm glad you think me an honest man, my friend," said Charley, pouring out a good four-finger drink and passing the bottle over to his companion, who followed suit. "I've always borne that reputation, and guess I can keep any secret you're a mind to intrust with me."

"I'll bet you can."

"But I can't get over you're being so confidential with me on so short an acquaintance," said Charley. "Here's to you," reaching over and clinking glasses.

Gulping down the tangle-foot with a relish that showed them to be old samplers, the pair put their heads together and began to talk in a low tone of voice.



RIDING INTO A CHURCH TO DEFY THE AUTHORITIES.



"Out with your secret, pardner," said Charley. "I pledge you the honor of a scout and a soldier to keep it mum forever and a day, if you wish," he continued, extending his hand.

"Oh, it's not one of these eternity secrets," said the stranger. "That's just why I'm so free with it. I want to confide it to you for a purpose. Listen," and he dropped his voice to a whisper. "*Billy LeRoy is a murderer and a thief*, and I'm going to jug him. I want you to assist me if he shows fight."

Dead-Shot Charley jumped to his feet as quickly as if the stranger had thrust a bowie at him.

"Sit down here," said the little man, pulling his coat. "Don't get excited! Keep your shirt on."

"A murderer and a thief!" repeated Charley, putting his face close to that of his companion's, and looking him straight in the eyes. "Great God, man! who are you?"

"I'm Sheriff—well, it don't matter who I am," replied the stranger. "I propose to arrest Billy LeRoy before he leaves this place to-night, and I want your assistance. Yes or no, can I have it? I've a requisition in my pocket here from the Governor of Indiana for him. He's a desperate character, and will, no doubt, make a fight against capture."

This unexpected solution of Dead-Shot Charley's love affair set him in a perfect delirium of delight. He had calculated that his reinstatement in May's affections would necessitate a desperate deed on his part.

But now that the law had stepped in to put his rival out of the way, he regarded himself as the favored son of good fortune.

"My friend," he said again, taking the sheriff's hand, "you couldn't have hunted these diggins high and low for a lifetime and find a more willing partner in your little game. That damned smooth-faced young villain has made an enemy of me, and I'm ready to shake him up any moment you say the word. I've got two revolvers here," he continued, tapping them with his hand, "that never missed tickling anything I fired them at."

During this short conversation the dance had went on. Billy LeRoy had noticed his rival and the little man talking together, and his guilty conscience and the affair in the green-room made him suspicious that they were concocting some plot not conducive to his comfort.

"May," he said, as they whirled in the waltz, "if I get into any

trouble here to-night, I want you to stick by me. You will, won't you?"

"Through thick and thin, Billy, if the devil himself should rise up against you. Don't you weaken a bit. Dead-Shot Charley haint got the nerve to muss with you."

Just as she finished the sentence the pair came opposite the table where Charley and the sheriff were sitting.

The music ceased, and Billy LeRoy and his enslaver stood face to face with his enemies.

The little man quietly drew his revolver from under the table, and quick as a flash jumped to his feet and levelled it straight in Billy's face.

A piercing shriek rang through the ball-room, as May Vivian sprang forward and clutched the gleaming weapon in her hand.

That moment gave Billy a chance to pull his revolver.

Crack went Dead-Shot Charley's shooter in Billy's face!

For the first time in his life he proved a bad shot.

Ere he could snap his trigger again, bang went Billy's weapon, and the scout fell wounded to the floor.

Placing his revolver over May Vivian's shoulder, Billy pulled again, and the Hoosier sheriff tumbled back a dead man!

Then bounding on to the table he leaped over chairs and the heads of men and women, upsetting wine bottles and battering hats and bonnets, and went plunging headlong through the closed windows to the ground below.

The revel had, indeed, been turned into a rout. Revolvers gleamed in the gaslight, and confusion reigned over the scene.

Out into the night went Billy LeRoy, the revengeful shouts of the revelers ringing in his ears.

"The whole world is against me now," he muttered, as he hurried down a street leading into the open country, "and by the Eternal God it will find in me a foeman ready to fight to the death."

He had become an outlaw in earnest, and he mustered up all the villainy in his nature for the profession.

AN OUTLAW WEDDING.





CHAPTER III.

**JOINS A BAND OF HIGHWAYMEN—HIS MEETING WITH TOM O'PHALLIER,
THE NOTED DESPERADO—THE REVEL IN THE CAVE—PUTTING HIS
METTLE TO THE TEST—BILLY'S FIRST STAGE-COACH ROBBERY.**

Reaching the outskirts of Leadville, which was then much smaller in area than now, he paused to rest.

The black mantle of night was giving way to the dawn of another day, and one by one the lamp-lights went out in the gay city. Satan's subjects had dipped deep into dissipation, and now were hastening homeward to drown in sleep the effects of their night's carousal.

"I'll have to make lively tracks out of these diggins," muttered Billy to himself, as he got up and started on. "Some one may be straggling this way whom I don't care to meet. I've got five bullets left yet, however," he continued, taking his revolver from his pocket. "You done nobly to-night, my little friend," he went on, looking admiringly at the weapon. "You'll be my stand-by in the future, and God help the man who thinks he has got a better pop than you are, and tries to prove it on my carcass. The only thing I regret about this night's business is having to skip away from May. But I'll come across her yet. She said she would stick by me, whatever happened, and I think she meant it."

He had reached a large barn standing near the roadside in which were stabled a number of horses, used for working in the mines.

Their stamping attracted his attention, and he stopped abruptly and turned and looked behind him.

"A good idea," he exclaimed, gleefully, "I'll appropriate one of those animals to my use. Horse-thieving is worse than murdering out in this country, but I am taking all sorts of chances on my life now-a-days, so what's the odds?"

Going up to the doors of the barn, he found them locked with a small padlock, the staples of which, he could see, were only driven into the

wood, and could be pulled out with a little prying. Taking a large jack-knife from his pocket, he soon had the doors open.

In the first stall stood a magnificent specimen of the equine race, whose clean, trim limbs and lithe, graceful body, betokened speed and endurance.

Grabbing a bridle from a hook near by he put it on the animal and led him out into the road. Leaping on to his back he galloped away with the speed of the wind.

He was a horse-thief now and a murderer, and these distinguished accomplishments made him anxious to put as much distance as possible between himself and civilization.

On, on, he went, and when the sun rose in his glory he was far to the west of Leadville. The day passed on and nothing occurred to obstruct his progress. The country through which he was passing was high, undulating prairie land. Here and there from the tops of the long swells in the surface the course of streams far away to the right and left were well defined by dark lines of trees, from which the autumn-tinted foliage had not yet been cast. The faded grass and the golden-hued flowers, the limpid brooks in which darted shoals of silver-backed fish, possessed no interest for Billy LeRoy.

The curse of a guilty conscience was ringing in his ears!

He had just crossed a small stream skirted by some wind-twisted trees, and was ascending a slope leading up to the top of a long stretch of rugged hills, when he espied two horsemen, both splendidly mounted, on the crest of the ridge, riding toward him. They wore low-crowned, broad-brimmed hats, looped up on the sides. They were heavily armed. A repeating rifle was swung behind the shoulders of each, and a holster was attached to the saddle bow.

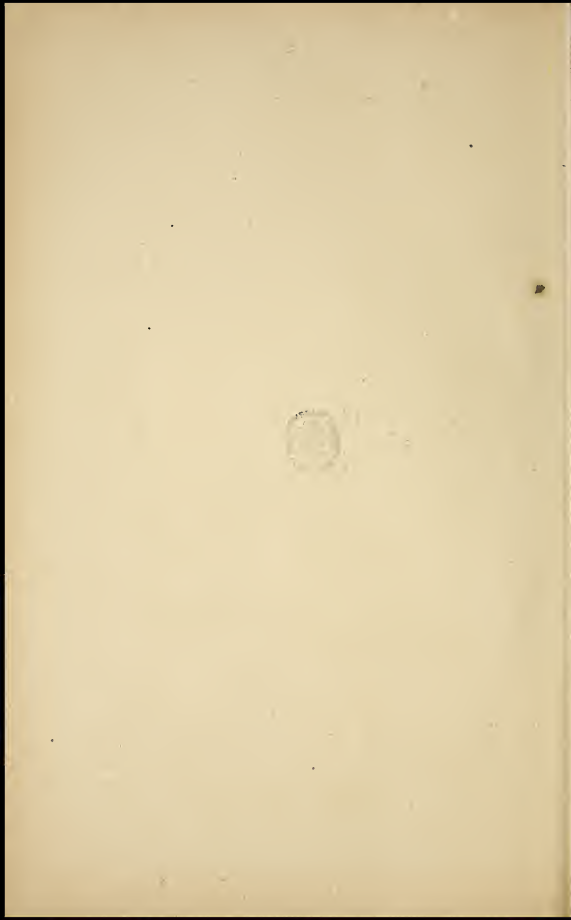
When they had approached within about seventy-five yards of Billy they suddenly halted, and, drawing their revolvers simultaneously, commanded him to halt, calling out at the same time for him to "throw up his hands."

A cold shudder ran through his veins. He had fancied that he was beyond the pale of capture, and to find himself thus confronted unnerved him for the moment.

"My life is worth nothing," he thought to himself. "But I won't sell it cheap," he said aloud. Pulling his revolver, he cried: "Fire away, damn you," and crack, rang out his weapon on the air.

SQUANDERING THE SPOTS.





As grim and unmoved as a pair of centaurs, the two men sat upon their steeds, apparently fearless of any leaden messenger of death.

"Up with your hands, I say," exclaimed one of them, "you poor fool, do you want to plow your nose into the earth?"

Billy hesitated; he was in a quandary how to act.

The mysterious horsemen put spurs to their steeds and galloped to each side of him before he fairly realized it.

"Put down that pistol, stranger," said one of them, coolly. "We are not in the shooting business to-day."

The perfect *sang froid* of both of the men completely upset Billy. He was fascinated, and for the nonce regarded the pair as supernatural beings. He lowered his pistol and looked from one to the other wonderingly.

"Why, he's only a kid, Dave," said the horseman on the right.

"Yes, but a mighty plucky one," replied Dave. "What might you be doing around these parts, young feller?" he asked.

Billy divined in a moment that neither knew anything about him, and this assurance elevated his spirits.

"Prospecting about the country for the good of my health," he replied in a bravado manner.

"Well, this is a mighty unhealthy country, kid. Eh, Tom?"

"I reckon he'll find it so, Dave, if he's got any lucre lying round loose in his clothes," returned Tom O'Phallier, who was one of the most notorious desperadoes in the West.

Billy's face lit up with joy as the truth flashed across his mind. He had fallen in with highwaymen.

"I'm as poor as a crow in January, my friends," he exclaimed. "This little joker and this horse is all I possess in the world, and I won't give them up without making a lively kick over it."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Tom O'Phallier, "you're an inflated sort of a rooster, and damn me if I don't kinder cotton to your grit, foolish and all as it is."

"What I'm trying to get through my brain-pan is," said Dave Rudabaugh, who was a worthy companion to Tom O'Phallier in point of villainy, "what the devil brings you in these parts, young fellow. Where do you hail from, if you're not too gallus to tell?"

"Well, seein' as your curiosity is all ablaze to know all about me, I'll tell you."

Billy had made up his mind that if he told them the truth it would immediately put him on a footing with them.

"I'm from Leadville," he said, "and the cause of my being here is that that town became too hot for me as a place of residence."

"Doing a little funny work, eh?" asked Tom O'Phallier.

"Not exactly funny," said Billy. "It was pretty serious while it lasted."

"Ha! ha! The neck-stretchers in that burgh have taken a fancy to you, have they?"

"Well, I think if they'd collared me last night there would have been a necktie sociable in which I would have figured as the main guy," said Billy, laughing.

In as few words as possible he told them of the affair at the ball, and of his flight from the vengeance of those present.

"He'll do to train along with our crowd, Dave. Young man, I guess we'll have to take a mortgage on your services. You're willin' to try your hand at freebootin'; ain't you? You might as well take chances at that, seein' as how Judge Lynch has taken a fancy to you, anyway."

"I'm yours to command, heart and soul," said Billy, with animation.

"Well, follow us, then," said Dave Rudabaugh, starting on a gallop back towards the hills.

Billy obeyed with alacrity, and the three went flying up the slope. As they reached the top of the ridge the trio halted.

Below them lay a broad, green valley, spread out in the sunlight, bounded by a line of hills toward the northeast, and widening toward the southwest. A noble growth of timber skirted the margin of a broad stream which meandered through the valley.

It was a lovely spot, fit for the abode of the most ardent lover of nature in its native grandeur and beauty, instead of being the rendezvous of desperadoes and cut-throats.

"We've got a pretty good camping spot, young fellow," said Tom O'Phallier, looking proudly down on the scene before them. On they rode down into the valley, waded the stream and then made straight for the hills beyond.

Ten minutes' brisk riding brought them to the base of a rocky-ribbed hill, in the side of which was the opening to a cave.

THE FIGHTING PARSON OF LINCOLN, N. H.





As they halted before its mouth, three men dressed like Billy's companions, and equally well supplied with dangerous looking deringers and bowies, made their appearance.

"What have you got there?" asked the first one who came out. "Gone into the kidnappin' business, boy?"

"Not quite as bad as that, Jim," replied Dave Rudabaugh.

"Where did you capture the kid?" asked a second one, coming close to Billy, who had dismounted with his companions and stood holding his horse and eyeing the inquisitive three disdainfully.

"Don't you make any mistake in him, lads," said Tom O'Phallier. "Although he is a kid he has got just the stuff in him that we want."

Their curiosity was soon satisfied by Tom and Dave, and Billy soon was made to feel perfectly at ease.

"He's ready to join us," said Tom O'Phallier, "and as soon as we can get away with our supper we'll swear him into the gang."

Preparations for the evening meal were at once begun. Kettles and frying pans were brought out and placed on fires built on the green-sward in front of the cave, and in a short space of time a meal that would delight the palate of an epicurean was ready.

Billy LeRoy was not modest about helping himself to the food. He ate with the voracity of a shark, and when his hunger was satisfied rose to his feet and said:

"I'm ready now, pardners, to swear myself into purgatory and a half mile beyond, if necessary. Proceed as soon as you like with your performance."

"Are you aware, kid, that you are fixing your neck to stretch a rope one of these days?" asked Dave Rudebaugh, moving back from the group who were seated about, eating their meal.

"Don't think you can frighten me, Dave, by any such talk," said Billy, laughing. "My neck has been eligible to an air-dance for some time."

"He's game, make no mistake, Dave," spoke up Tom O'Phallier. "If he haint, we'll soon find it out. His first command to obey will tell what sort o' stuff he's made of."

"What're you going to put him at, Tom," asked Dave. "Corraling bulls or bilking stage coaches?"

"How would you like to tackle a mail coach, kid?" asked Tom O'Phallier.

"I think I could shake one up for all it's worth," replied Billy, "providin' I had a good horse under me and a pair of revolvers."

"Well, we'll let you try it," said Tom. "Hurry up, lads, with your feedin'. We'll get into the cave and make a night of it. We've been doing some big strokes lately, and we can afford to do a little celebration on the head of it. That liquor we collared from old Parson's, the rancher, will spile if we don't make away with it."

Supper finished, Tom led the way into the cave through a narrow passage, scarcely wide enough for two men to walk abreast.

The mantle of night had begun to fall, making the passage-way as dark as Erebus.

Billy brought up the rear of the party, one hand on the shoulder of Jim Wilson, who preceded him.

Suddenly the latter made a spring forward, and before Billy could realize what had happened he lay sprawling on his face.

In an instant he was circled with ropes around his body and arms, and about the legs.

"Go on with your damned nonsense," he said, laughing. "If you can have any fun at my expense, boys, you're welcome to it."

All was dark; so dark, in fact, that he could not distinguish an object about him.

To be placed in the hands of desperadoes in so gloomy a spot, not knowing what their intentions were, might well appall the courage of an ordinary person.

But Billy LeRoy had reached that point where desperation had rendered him daring to reckless. With two murders on his soul, yes, three, so far as he knew, life to him was a very precarious affair. Every way he turned he saw the hand of the law's vengeance upraised to crush him.

Not a sound came from the lips of his companions.

When their captive was securely bound, they raised him up, carried him along and set him down on a large rock, after which his eyes were securely bandaged. Then a number of hanging lamps were lit and the outlaws' retreat assumed a tenable appearance.

A long, rough table in the center of the cave, set up on four pegs driven into the ground, was covered with holsters, guns, swords, old hats, boots and clothing, all thrown together in bewildering confusion.

Dave Rudabaugh and Jim Wilson soon cleared them away, and

WINNING ON A FULL HAND.





Tom O'Phallier busied himself in replacing them with tin cups and bottles of liquor.

In the midst of these Bacchanalian appurtenances, he placed a hideous, grinning skull.

"Pards, are you ready?" he asked, in a deep, sepulchral voice, assumed for the occasion.

"Aye, aye, chief," replied the others, a comical expression on each of their faces.

"Billy LeRoy, are you willing to perform the rites that will make you a member of this fraternity of highwaymen?" asked Tom O'Phallier, moving up near to where he was sitting.

"I am willing to do anything, from pitch and toss to manslaughter," Billy replied.

"Then, pards, unbind his legs and bring him to the council seat."

The highwaymen were winking and smirking at each other as they advanced to obey the order.

Billy's limbs free, he was led up to the table and made to stand in front of it, a man on each side of him. Two other members of the fraternity stood behind him.

"Fill the skull with blood, Dave, and I'll swear him," said Tom O'Phallier.

Dave Rudabaugh picked up the skull and a bottle of liquor and stepped far enough away so that Billy could not hear the gurgling of the bottle.

"It's pretty tough on a man to make him drink a skull full of blood after getting away with a square meal," said Billy, smiling.

His coolness and utter indifference to what was going on about him made the out-laws regard him with wonder and admiration.

"Billy LeRoy," said Tom O'Phallier, "are you ready to take the oath?"

"I'm ready to take anything I can get hold of, whether it's an oath or a gold mine," he replied.

"Well, then, take a drink," said Tom, bursting into a loud and hearty laugh, in which all hands joined.

The skull was placed up to Billy's lips. One whiff of the whisky settled him. He strove to free his arms to grasp the ghastly goblet, but found it useless.

"Blood! Blood!" he exclaimed, gulping down the fiery fluid.

"I'd butcher all the neck stretchers in creation for that kind of blood," he continued, smacking his lips. The bandage was taken from his eyes and his arms freed.

The burlesque ceremony over, the outlaws seated themselves about the table, and entered into a sociable revel.

"Give us a song, Jim Wilson," said Rudabaugh, when all hands had become mellowed by their potations.

"Join in the chorus, pards," said Jim, striking up the following ballad :

Hurrah, o'er the prairies broad to roam,
Hurrah for the stilly hour,
When the moon looks down from her lofty dome,
Like a maid from her battle tower.
When ladies scream, and their gems do glow,
As their pockets we unload,
We cry good night, with a smile and a bow ;
And hurrah, hurrah, for the road !

"Raise it, boys," he cried, and they all joined in the chorus with a vim.

The hirelings and minions of law we defy,
We scorn grim Death and his six-foot abode ;
Our motto is, "plunder, boys, never say die,"
Hurrah, hurrah, three cheers for the road !

Before the echoing and re-echoing of the melody of the song through the cavern had died away, he broke forth with the second verse :

Hurrah for the hawk and his stroke so sure,
For the wolf and his fated prey ;
For the grim gray shark that prowls the sea,
Bathed in a gory spray.
Like them we live by what we can spoil
And no man's wrath fear we ;
Like them we die when our time doth come—
The death of the rover free !

All took up the chorus and made the cavern ring again. The

THE ABDUCTION OF MAY VIVIAN.





liquor went round and round. Time between drinks was short enough to have pleased the most convivial bacchananta.

One by one they succumbed to the influence of the frisky god, and one by one they rolled under the table to sleep off their debauch.

Billy was initiated. His first exploit on the road as a professional highwayman was yet to come.

He proved a bold and successful one, as many a poor traveler's untimely grave on the plains of Colorado and New Mexico can testify !

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROBBER'S REVEL CONTINUED—A FOUR DAYS' DEBAUCH—BILLY GETS HIS FIRST COMMAND—TACKLING A MAIL COACH SINGLE-HANDED—THE MYSTERIOUS FEMALE PASSENGER—MAY VIVIAN IN A TIGHT SPOT—AN EXCITING MEETING.

The morning came, and the drunken outlaws awoke to sobriety and aching heads. Following the example of all debauchees they sampled old Parson's whisky very liberally, and soon found themselves again in a revived and exhilarated condition, a result which proved so pleasing to them that they indulged their appetite for "jig water" so frequently that all were soon as drunk as Bacchus. The day was spent in dancing, singing, card playing and boasting of their murders and exploits.

Billy was an enthusiastic participant in the orgie. The stings of conscience, if he had any, were deadened by the revelry in which he was engaged.

For four days the highwaymen gave themselves up to the gratification of their bibulous passions, and then their liquor supply began to run low.

"We've got to slack up on this racket, boys," said Tom O'Phallier, "and get down to business. The mail-coach from Leadville to the mining camps in the Coyote Hills are carrying some pretty good boodle these days, and we'd oughter have a whack at them. I guess we'll give you a go at them, Billy, as soon as you're straightened up."

"I'm ready, pard, at any time. Say the word, and I'll tackle a procession of mail coaches."

"Supposin' you have a tilt with one of them to-night?" said Tom, winking at his companions. "There's one passes up on the road from Leadville to the hills about six o'clock. It's only about ten miles south across country to the road, and you may try your luck on it, Billy."

Tom O'Phallier gave this command to Billy in a spirit of bravado



THE DISGUISED OF TOM O'PHALLIER.



recklessness more than from any hope of obtaining any great amount of valuables.

He regarded the Kid as too conceited, and thought that a shaking up with a party of travelers would knock a little of it out of him, if it did not cost him his life, a consideration with Tom not worth a moment's thought.

At four o'clock that afternoon, Billy, the Kid, mounted on his stolen horse and armed with two revolvers, rode off, cheered on his way by his brutal companions, who did not care a drink of whisky whether he ever returned or not.

"He may get taken down a notch or two. He's to all appearances the gamest youth I've seen," said Dave Rudabaugh, as the gang watched Billy ride away over the heath.

"Yes, and I think he can back up his pluck, when it's put to the test," said Tom O'Phallier.

"Time'll tell," said Jim Wilson.

No man ever set out with a firmer purpose to accomplish an object than did Billy, the Kid.

"Those roosters think I've not got the stuff in me for a highwayman. Ha! ha!" he laughed, sardonically, "I'll make 'em own me the boss of every one that ever straddled a horse. I'll make every one of that gang tip his hat to me before I get through with them, and acknowledge me as good and a little better than they make 'em."

The sun had sunk low in the west when he came in sight of the highway leading from Leadville to the mining camps in the Coyote Hills.

Making for a small hill which shielded him from the view of travelers on the road, he dismounted and examined his weapons.

"Now for business," he exclaimed, adjusting a mask on his face, "whether it's a mail coach or private conveyances, let 'em come on. I'll raise something or die a-trying."

Three hours passed, and no person or vehicle appeared.

At last Billy's patient wait was rewarded.

With a rattling, lumbering gait, the evening mail-coach from Leadville came up the road, the driver sitting on the box humming some familiar air.

There were only four passengers aboard. Three males—McNeil, Thurman and a discharged soldier—and a female whom the reader has met before.

The "beautiful songstress," May Vivian!

McNeil had laid down on the front seat, Thurman on the hind seat, and May on the middle seat between them, and they all were sound asleep.

After proceeding on, McNeil aroused Thurman, telling him that the road agents had stopped the coach, and he sat up and drew from his pocket a small pistol.

The first words he heard after waking were :

"Are you going to do it?" repeated twice by Billy LeRoy.

Thurman at once looked out of the door, pistol in hand, and asked the Kid what he wanted. The reply was :

"G—d d—n you all, get out of there quick, and get out on this side."

Thurman told him he would not get out.

Billy replied :

"Damn you, then I'll shoot you out," which so alarmed the lady that she at once sprang out on the side where the robber stood, walked toward him a few steps and turned into the brush.

Billy then cursed the lady, and told her that if she didn't come out of the brush he would shoot her, too, when the driver spoke up and said :

"That's a lady ; don't kill her."

May, who was heavily veiled, started back towards the coach, trembling with terror, and got into it again.

McNeil about this time got out of the coach on the opposite side from the robber, pistol in hand, but Thurman didn't get out just at that time.

Some words passed, and Billy made threats and did considerable cursing, when he demanded the through mail, which was promptly carried to him by the discharged soldier.

While Billy was going through the mail, Thurman got quietly out of the stage, holding his cocked pistol in hand, and walked around to the rear of the stage.

After the Kid had taken what he wanted from the mail bags, he demanded to know where the man was who wouldn't get out of the coach, and McNeil started towards him.

Billy commanded McNeil to throw up his hands, and the left hand was raised.

A ROBBERY ON A RACE-COURSE.





McNeil not raising his right hand excited the young highwayman's curiosity, and he inquired :

"What have you got in that hand?"

McNeil replied that he had a pistol, whereupon the Kid fired at him and McNeil dropped dead in his tracks.

Thurman and the ex-soldier returned the fire at the same instant, but neither shot took effect.

Billy spurred his horse forward, and fired at the pair before they could repeat.

"I waste no powder or lead, curse you," he exclaimed, as they both fell back seriously wounded into the ditch.

The driver, through all the scrimmage, had sat on his box so overcome by fear that he was powerless to make any resistance.

"Throw me your weapons," cried Billy, riding up alongside of the coach, "or I'll give you a dose of the same medicine that I've given the rest of your crowd."

The cowardly Jehu quickly obeyed.

"Now, drive on," Billy ordered. "No! no! stop!" he cried, as the coach moved away. "You've got a piece of cargo aboard that I haven't examined."

The stage again came to a halt.

Riding up to the door of the vehicle he opened it and peered in.

Trembling in one corner lay May Vivian.

"I guess you're the most valuable piece of property of the lot," said Billy, laughing. "Get up here until I see what you're like," he commanded.

"Oh, spare me, sir! oh, spare me, sir!" pleaded the songstress, her voice trembling with fright.

"Don't fret yourself, my gentle gazelle," said Billy. "Just step out here, where I can look you over," he continued, getting off his horse.

Quivering with terror, she came forth.

Tearing away her veil, Billy looked into her face, and then jumped back fairly paralyzed for the moment with astonishment.

"May Vivian!" he cried, grasping her by the arms, "for God's sake, how came you here?"

It was May's turn now to be astonished.

Who was this knight of the road, and how did he know her name? were the questions that flashed through her mind.

"Don't you know me, May?" Billy asked, still holding her firmly.

"No! no! For heaven's sake, sir, release me and let me go," she cried, wildly.

"Drive on," commanded Billy, pointing his revolver at the driver, "get out of these diggins quick."

The Jehu obeyed with alacrity.

Then Billy led his fair captive so as to be out of hearing distance of the two wounded men, who lay groaning in the ditch.

"Now do you know me, May?" he exclaimed, pulling off his mask. "I'm Billy LeRoy, ex-female personator and professional highwayman. You said you would stick by me, May, through thick and thin. Let me see now if you're as good as your word."

May stared at the young highwayman for a moment, and then threw her arms around his neck.

"I'm as good as my word every time, Billy," she exclaimed. "I meant every word I said, old boy, and you'll find it so."

"Then let us fly from here," he said. "Put your foot in the stirrup, May, and I'll help you to mount. This neighborhood is too hot for us to spend much time in telling long stories."

A few minutes later the pair were galloping away to the outlaw retreat, Billy's booty strapped about his neck.

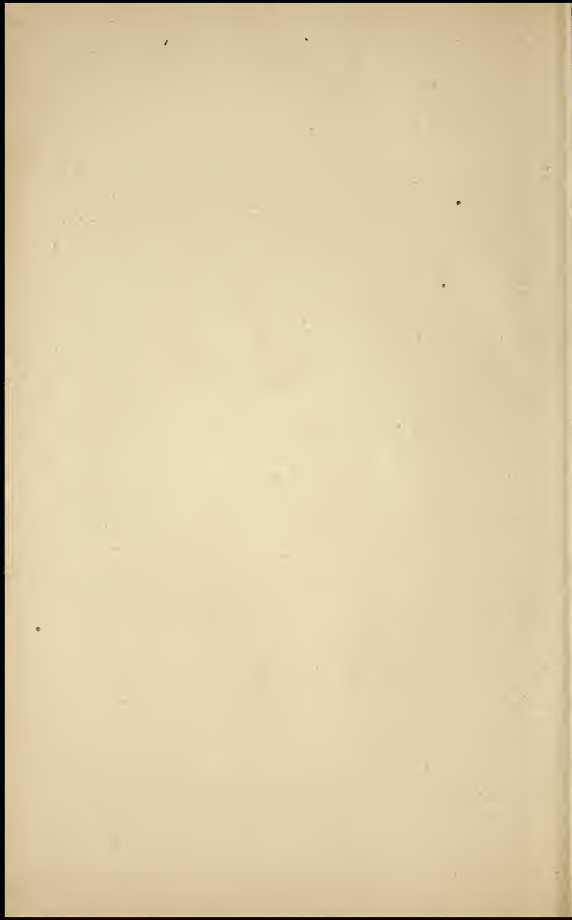
He had captured a wealthy mail-bag and his sweet-heart!

"A highwayman who would want to do more than that on a first attempt at the business would be a hog," concluded Billy, as he rode along.

And every sensible reader will agree that he was about right.



A PERILOUS PREDICAMENT.



CHAPTER V.

BILLY'S RETURN WITH HIS CAPTIVE—MAY VIVIAN'S WELCOME—BILLY IS HAILED CHIEF OF THE BAND—OUTLAW CHIVALRY—AN UNWELCOME VISIT—MAY IS TAKEN BACK TO LEADVILLE—BILLY DONS FEMALE ATTIRE AND SERVES AS A WAITRESS IN A CONCERT SALOON—GETS INTO LIMBO—DEAD-SHOT CHARLEY'S REVENGE—BILLY'S DARING ESCAPE.

As the pair rode along over the country back to the cavern, May related all that had occurred since the night of the ball. Dead-Shot Charley's wound had not proved serious, and he was about in his usual haunts vowing vengeance against Billy.

"I'll give him all the vengeance he wants," laughed Billy. "I'll take you back to Leadville to-morrow night, and——"

"Great heavens, Billy!" interrupted May, "don't think of doing anything so foolish. Your life would not be worth a drink in that town."

"I'll take chances on that, May," he replied. "You forget that I can disguise myself so that my own mother wouldn't know me. Don't you kick against my going back, May. I'm going to be near you for a while, and I'll take chances on my life to do it."

Talking about one thing and another in which they were interested, they at last reached the outlaw retreat.

Jim Wilson was doing sentinel duty, and when the pair came within a short distance of the cave he demanded the password.

A shrill whoop from Billy was the answer.

"Hullo, Jim," followed. "Is that you?"

"Who are you?" demanded Jim, in a rough voice. "Damn you, give me the password. I want no foolery around here."

As he finished the sentence, Jim sprang forward and grabbed Billy's horse by the bit.

"Easy, Jim, don't get excited," said Billy, in a cool tone of voice.

"It's you, Kid, is it?" said Wilson, coming around to the side of the horse.

The darkness of night and the natural excitement incident to the meeting caused Jim Wilson not to notice May Vivian, who had crouched close to Billy in terror of her queer surroundings.

"Who or what in h—l have you got here?" Jim exclaimed, grabbing hold of May's skirts.

"Don't be frightened, May," said Billy, as he felt the trembling frame of the fair songstress against him. "I've got the prettiest and best piece of property that ever a highwayman captured, Jim," he continued.

"Well, I'll be damned if you're not the queerest rooster that ever I came across," said Jim, laughing.

Dismounting, Billy helped May down, and then pulled the mail bag from across the horse's neck, and gave it to Jim. "Take that, old boy," he said, "There's a good grab for each of us, I reckon." Jim hurried into the cave, and in a few moments aroused all the gang and brought them out.

The highwaymen gathered around Billy and May, and gave expression to their feelings, each in their peculiar style. Strange to say, no remarks were passed in May Vivian's presence that would offend the most morally sensitive lady, a fact stranger still when the character of "the unrivalled queen, etc.," is taken into consideration. She was conducted into the cave, and treated as hospitably as the rude conveniences of the bandit's quarters would permit.

Seated at the table with Billy by her side, she made herself as much at home as if she were in the concert saloons at Leadville, seeking whom she might bewitch into extravagance by her smiles and blandishments.

When the bottle came her way she tipped it up at a pouring angle with all the grace, if there is any grace about the performance, of an experienced tippler. And, furthermore, she drank her "pisen" with so much relish that Tom O'Phallier forgot the gentlemanly character he had assumed for the occasion, and reached over the table and asked May to "give him her paw," adding, "old gal, you're a brick!"

"Billy," exclaimed Dave Rudabaugh, in a burst of admiration, "you're the king pin of the road, and this 'ere piece of calico," patting May on the back, "is a match for you. In capturing her you've won the spurs as boss of the highway!"

"Here! here!" exclaimed all hands.

"I'll give in that you're chief of the gang," cried Tom O'Phallier, leaning over the table and clinking glasses with Billy.

"Well, I'll be cursed if you fellows don't take big stock in the fair sex, eh, May?" said Billy.

"That's where their heads are level, Billy," said May, looking at him archly.

"I don't agree with you, May," he replied. "My idea of ——"

"Oh, oh," exclaimed all hands, "he's getting jealous."

"Not a bit," retorted Billy. "What I was going to say is, that my idea of a true highwayman is that he should first look after plunder, and then look after the ladies. That's what I did to-night. May, didn't I?"

"That reminds me, Billy, that we haven't looked after the boodle you grabbed from the mail coach," said Tom O'Phallier.

"Sure enough," said Jim Wilson, hauling the mail bag down in front of where they were sitting.

With his bowie knife the desperado soon made a big gap in it, and rolled its contents out upon the table.

All hands went to tearing open the letters, and soon a huge pile of greenbacks and valuable notes were brought to light.

When all the letters had been examined, a division of their contents was made equally between the gang.

Then a rude couch off in one corner of the cave was fixed up for May. Several blankets were suspended in front of it, and she laid down secure from observation.

Billy's companions spent a half hour or more in listening to his account of his first venture, and bunked down together to sleep until the morrow.

It was late in the forenoon when the gang awoke from their slumbers, and then all but May and Billy went out in front of the cave to take care of their horses and prepare their breakfast.

After that meal was disposed of the men again went back to their lair, and engaged in a game of cards to while away the time until the evening, when it was proposed that they would scour the country over to see if any thing was abroad on which they might prey.

Their lair was located in a valley at the head of the Arkansas river, a considerable distance from the Muskinto, Western Pass, High Line and Malta Roads, all of which led into Leadville from the north

and south. These roads were much traveled by miners and ranchmen in the great camps and ranches that lay to the west of Leadville, and consequently afforded a good stamping ground to the highwaymen. Their plan was to ascertain the time when parties of miners or ranchmen were likely to travel these highways, and then lie in wait and rob them.

The cowardly driver of the coach on which Billy made his first essay as a road agent, drove only a short distance to the west, and then when he felt assured that the young highwaymen was gone, turned back and picking up the dead bodies of McNeil and the ex-soldier (?) and Mr. Thurman, who was severely wounded, drove back into Leadville.

The news of the robbery and murders spread through the town, and parties were made up to scour the country in search of the assassin and his band.

Some took one road and some another. Two of the bravest detectives in Leadville followed the Muskinto road, on which the robbery had taken place, and on arriving at the scene of its perpetration, struck off in the direction of the cave. Leaving their horses in charge of a party of prospectors, who had camped that morning on the river, they borrowed a boat of the gold-hunters and rowed along the western bank, hoping to discover the highwaymen's retreat unknown to them, and then go back and make up a party to attack and capture them.

The detectives had rowed within about a mile of the head of the river when on turning a bend they were surprised on seeing a beautiful woman in a boat some thirty or forty rods in advance of them.

The fair water nymph was May Vivian. Tiring of stopping about the cave she had wandered off by herself, and finding the boat at the bank of the river, concluded to take a sail.

The approach of the two men in the boat startled her for the moment. As soon as she could recover herself, the thought flashed across her mind that they were in search of Billy and his comrades. The highwaymen had spoken in her presence of the probability of scouting parties being sent out to hunt the robber of the mail coach, and she at once concluded that this visit brooded the gang no good.

"Hello there," sang out one of the detectives, "What are you doing in these parts, Miss What-ever-your-name is?"

"Shooting spies," returned May, rising up in the boat and firing



AT CLOSE QUARTERS.



at the men. Then dropping down she grabbed the oars and began rowing towards the shore for dear life.

The firing reached the robbers' ears, and in the twinkling of an eye they dropped their cards and rushed out of the cave.

Billy was the first to take in the situation, and acted at once.

His trusty carbine rang out on the air twice, as quick as he could pull the trigger, and May's persuers fell back food for the fishes of Arkansas River. Reaching the shore, May ran to her protectors.

"Pack up your traps, boys," said Billy, "we'd better cut these dig-gins at once. There's no tellin' how many neck-stretchers there may be on our tracks."

"You're right, Billy," said Tom O'Phallier, "our best plan is to vamoose the ranch at once."

Their preparations for flight were soon completed, and each mounting on their horses set out together.

May and Billy rode together. He had made up his mind that it would not do for her to accompany him in his outlaw career, and decided that it was best to take her back to Leadville.

The risk that he run in doing so never gave him a thought. Recklessness was his chief characteristic. It is doubtful whether he knew what fear was.

From his earliest experience in crime, the consequences of his deeds never troubled him. He seemed to regard life as a thing of jest, not worth a serious consideration.

As an example of this spirit of recklessness which ruled his life and actions, it is stated that when confined in jail at Santa Fe, New Mexico, under a sentence of death, he regaled his keepers with ribald songs, of which the following is a specimen :

King Death is a jolly old fellow ;
He gives us, when wanted, the wink ;
His face is all bony and yellow,
A skull is his goblet for drink.
The monarch or beggar don't matter—
The master's the same as the slave ;
Old Death never stopping to flatter,
Sweeps them all, just alike, to the grave.

Chorus.—Then hurrah for a funeral revel,
Hurrah for the coffin and pall,
Old Death is the friend of the Devil,
And both of them go for us all.

Possessed of such a reckless spirit it is little wonder, then, that May's protestations against his going back to Leadville had no effect on him.

"I'll defy them all, May, if necessary. But it won't be necessary, my girl," he said to her remonstrances. "Haven't you seen me in petticoats? and didn't I look sweet enough to set all the giddy young tender fools in love with me? Well, May, I'm going to disguise myself in the same way again, and I'll stay in Leadville until I get ready to slope out."

With this determination, he bade his companions farewell, after exacting a promise from them that they would keep him posted as to their whereabouts.

When he neared the city he dismounted and secured a good-hiding place, which was the more easily done on account of the darkness of night.

May promised to go and secure him a complete female outfit, and thus equipped he was to accompany her back.

The daring girl performed her part well, and when Billy walked into the concert saloon where he had made his "first appearance on any stage," not one of the vast crowd present surmised that he was any thing but what he appeared, "a damsel of free and easy virtue."

He passed and re-passed Dead-Shot Charlie, who was convalescent from his wound, but the keen-eyed scout never for the moment dreamed that May Vivian's beautiful companion was his deadly enemy and would-be-murderer. The manager of the concert saloon was among those who were captivated by "Miss Flora Mason, just arrived from Chicago," as May introduced him to her acquaintances.

He was on the lookout for just such entrancing sirens to "sling beer" and otherwise charm the nickles from his customers' pockets and therefore "Miss Flora Mason, just from Chicago," had no trouble in securing a place in his establishment.

For over a week Billy LeRoy acted as waitress in the concert saloon. His familiarity with May, and the devoted attention he paid her, at length excited the jealousy anew in Dead-Shot Charlie. That worthy began to "smell a mice," so to speak, and quietly shadowed the pair, both in the saloon and in the apartments in which they were stopping. Charley was so shrewd and quiet in his movements that the pair never suspected that they were being watched. The revengeful scout learned

enough to convince him that "Miss Mason" was not what she seemed, and he confided his suspicions to a detective, who joined him in the saloon business. The upshot of the combined investigation was that Billy LeRoy was surprised in bed one night with—well, with one whom he had no moral or legal right to slumber.

The intelligent reader will have to guess who it was.

From the luxury of fine apartments, the young highwayman was ruthlessly dragged at night to a prison cell.

No time was wasted in bringing him to a trial on a charge of robbing the United States mail. He was convicted and sentenced to ten years imprisonment at hard labor in the government prison at Detroit, Michigan. Considering that he had committed four or five murders, it was a remarkably light sentence. But it was difficult to get proof of any of them, so he was "sent up" to get him out of the way of his pals, whom it was feared would rescue him.

If evidence of his guilt as a murder could be obtained meanwhile, it could be used against him just the same.

Light as the sentence was, Billy did not—or rather May Vivian and his pals did not—propose that he should serve it.

Jim Wilson had disguised himself and come to Leadville, and when Billy was sentenced he proposed to rescue him from the law's clutches, and carried it out. The manner in which Billy was set at liberty is thus told by Jim Wilson :

"I proposed to May Vivian that we get two suits of female duds fust, exactly alike.

"Then we were to get a suit of clothes, man's clothes, for Billy, and the extra woman's rig and men's clothes were to be kept ready for a close call.

"We were to keep a close lookout for the time when he was to be taken away, get on the train with him, and then at the first opportunity which offered at night, we were to take whatever guards were with him, put up a job on them, and dress Billy like the girl. Then we could go on our way rejoicing.

"I went and got the girl, and she was only too willing to risk anything for the man she had given up everything to. She had been down-hearted before and drinking like a fish, but when she found out that Billy was to be got away, she sobered right up and was as saucy and pert as could be.

"We at once set about making our arrangements. We got the clothes all right, and then awaited the day when the boy was to be taken away.

"We had found out in the meantime that Deputy Marshal Cantril and a boy were to go to Detroit with Billy, and abided our time.

"The day came and we knew all about it, and when the carriage containing LeRoy and his guards drove up to the train, the girl and I were already on board. They took one double seat and we took the one directly behind them and awaited developments.

"The clothes we carried in a grip sack. Billy did not let on that he was aware of our existence, though two or three times I was afraid the girl would give us away.

"I and Cantril had a long talk, and I found out a lot about him before the night had got far along.

"Along in the night all the passengers got asleep. We were in a sleeping car, if it was not called such, and Cantril's boy got awfully sleepy. Cantril was thirsty and I put up a job on him.

"Going to the water tank after guaging his drinks and the time between them, I poured out some croton oil and left it in the cup. Then I pretended to take a hearty drink and made so much noise about gulping down, that Cantril got awful thirsty.

"I had no more than gained my seat till he made a dive for the tank, and without tilting the cup filled it and emptied it. To partially kill the stench of the croton, I had put a dash of burnt liquor in it. If Cantril tasted anything wrong in the water he attributed it to his sour stomach and so said nothing.

"It was not many minutes until the Deputy Marshal felt a general weakness about his bread basket.

"I had settled down for what looked like a snooze, the girl was curled up kitten fashion on the seat, and Billy was breathing heavily, just for all the world like he was in the soundest of a gentle and peaceful sleep.

"If Cantril thought seriously of calling the brakeman, he did not, as neither the brakeman nor conductor were in the car. He looked once at Billy, then over in my direction, then without standing on the order of his going, hastened for the toilet room.

"When Deputy Marshall Cantril entered the room and slammed the door to, we acted. All of us were up and doing in a second, for



"MURDER WILL OUT!"



none of us had been asleep. The irons were off from Billy in less than ten seconds, and then the extra suit of woman's toggery was put on him. When all was finished he curled down in my seat, just like the girl had been, and the girl got up and skipped into another car.

"My next move was to put my head over on Billy's shoulder, and in another minute the brakeman came in. As he passed by with his lantern, I raised up as if awoke by the noise and the light, and discovered that the prisoner was gone.

"I raised the hue and cry, and the brakeman took it up, and Cantril came out of the toilet room. Then ensued a scene of confusion. He wanted the train stopped and the conductor would not stop it until he got to Hays City, Kansas, five miles away. When we got there the girl got off, Cantril and his assistant got off, and Billy and I went on with the train, tickled almost to death.

"Billy had even made such preparations for the escape in a female wardrobe as to turn in and cut his boots down the sides and lace them with shoe strings just like a woman does. His feet were as small as the feet of a female, and so there was no danger on that score. On arriving at Kansas City we were driven to a hotel. We went up to our room, and Billy changed clothes.

"Bidding adieu to that house we went to another hotel and waited for the girl to come. She got in all right on the next train, joined us, and we went out from town about seven miles, and there bid Billy Le-Roy good-bye."

CHAPTER VI.

BILLY ENLISTS HIS BROTHER SAM IN THE OUTLAW BAND—COLORADO BECOMES TOO HOT FOR THE GANG—THEY FLY TO MEXICO—THE MOUNTAIN FASTNESSES OF THE KID AND HIS FOLLOWERS—TERRORIZING THE COUNTRY BY THEIR VILLAINY—WAR DECLARED ON THE OUTLAWS—AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

When Billy made his escape from the train, he walked back to —— City, and from there went back to his old home in Indiana, taking good care, however, to so disguise himself that his most intimate friend would not know him. He reached his father's home late in the night, and on making himself known was afforded a welcome. His father and mother, although condemning heartily his criminal course, loved their wayward son too well to have the law get him in its clutches. They urged upon him the risk he run in tarrying at home.

Their desire to have him a wanderer was heartily shared in by Billy. The love of adventure had prompted him more in his returning to the parental roof than any filial feelings.

During his short stay he managed to imbue his brother Sam with a hankering after outlaw life, and when he took his departure, Sam Pond, alias Potter, went with him.

* * * * *

One hundred and twenty-seven miles southeast of Las Vegas, New Mexico, is Fort Sumner, once the base of operations against the Indians who committed depredations against the stockmen.

The fort was abandoned some ten or twelve years ago, owing to the removal of troops further south, toward the border of Mexico. The property was condemned and sold to Pete Maxwell, a well-known ranchman of the section.

Since then it has been a depot for supplies for stockmen, and a station on the postal route to the Pecos Valley, and Panhandle, Texas.

During the fall of 1880 and the winter of 1881, on almost any fair day, there might have been seen lounging about the store or engaged



MAY VIVIAN AIDS THE "KID" TO ESCAPE WHILE BEING TAKEN TO THE
DETROIT PRISON.



in target practice, five men, all of them young, neatly dressed, and of good appearance. A stranger riding in the little hamlet would have taken them to be a party of Eastern gentlemen who had come into that sparsely settled region in search of sport. Many who have gone into that country have struck up an acquaintance with these men and found them agreeable fellows. Appearances were woefully deceiving, however. Agreeable and mild-mannered as they appeared, not one in the five but would cut a throat, rob a stage coach, shoot on the slightest provocation, or steal a drove of cattle, with as little hesitation or compunction as they would tackle a meal when hungry. The leader of this interesting party was Billy LeRoy, and his lieutenants were Tom O'Phallier, Jim Wilson, Dave Rudabaugh, and Sam Pond, alias Potter, alias LeRoy, the second.

They had all drifted together after quitting Colorado, and had eclipsed all their former deeds of villainy in that State.

For a number of years the people of eastern New Mexico and Panhandle, Texas, have been harassed by a gang who had run off stock, burned ranches and committed acts of violence and murder. In the Winter of '80 their deviltry stirred the law-abiding citizens of New Mexico to take action against them.

Their fastness was about thirty-five miles nearly due east from Fort Sumner, on the edge of the great Staked Plain.

In that region there is a small lake called Las Portales. It is surrounded by steep hills, from which flow numerous streams that feed the little lake. This place the robbers selected for their resort partly on account of its hiding places, but mainly on account of the opportunities it afforded for stock thieving.

No matter from what direction the storm came, it drove to the lake the herds of cattle which roam at large in this rich grazing country. There the band built for themselves one of those rude dugouts so common on the Western frontier, two sides formed by the side of the hill, the other two constructed of sod and dirt plastered together, and the whole covered by a thatched roof. Stockades or corrals were built near by in which to put stolen stock.

During pleasant weather the members of the gang lounged about Fort Sumner or other stations in that section. When the storm sent cattle scudding over the plains to the haven afforded by the hill-protected lake basin, the gang would hurry to their rendezvous and cut

out from the herd the best cattle, driving them into their coral, whence they were later sent to market.

Their booty was large, for they had a vast stock to select from, the whole country for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles either way being a rich, continuous pasture.

Besides the active members of the band, there were many who had apparently some settled occupation, and made themselves useful in disposing of the stolen cattle.

In every town of any size within a radius of 150 miles, there were butchers who dealt regularly in this stolen stock.

When supplies from roving herds ran short the desperadoes would make a raid on those that were guarded, attacking ranches and killing or driving off the inmates.

Besides their station at Las Portales, they had one at Bosque Grande, fifty miles to the southwest, and another at Greathouse's ranche, fifty miles to the north. Whenever they were pursued when running off stock, they had the choice of three places to which to resort.

The people of the surrounding country finally found the existence of the band unendurable. After repeated searches which failed, owing to the smallness of the pursuing parties, it was resolved to organize several bands, who should co-operate in a campaign, which should end only when the outlaws were driven out of the country; or their capture, dead or alive, was effected.

The authorities of the several counties which bordered on the country ranged over by the Kid's gang had been repeatedly petitioned to send out a posse of men to hunt them down, but as Las Portales was on disputed territory, the authorities were never able to settle on any plan of action.

At last the ranchmen took the matter into their own hands, and the first party they sent out succeeded in getting on the track of a detachment of the gang, who were hauling material to Las Portales, where they were building large stock yards. Although the party was not successful in capturing the outlaws, they made the outlaws flit about the country in a livelier manner than had been their wont.

This showed that nothing could be done by a small force. A guard was always kept out on the numerous peaks about Las Portales, from which outlook the country for twenty miles either way could be scanned by the outlaws, so that they could easily elude a small party.

The Panhandle Transportation Company, an association of western Texas, banded together for mutual protection, commissioned their superintendent, Frank Stewart, a brave fellow, who was just the man for such work, to organize an expedition against the outlaws.

The White Oaks, a flourishing mining camp, organized a band of rangers.

Still another party of picked men, under the head of Sheriff Pat Garrett, of Lincoln County, who is considered one of the bravest and coolest men in the whole region, joined in the campaign.

In the latter part of November Garrett, with a force of fourteen men, made a dash for Bosque Grande, riding all night, and there succeeded in capturing five of the outlaws. One of them was a condemned murderer who had escaped from jail; another of them was a murderer for whose arrest \$1,500 had been offered.

These are the sort of men who re-enforced the band. Las Portales had long been an asylum for fugitives from justice.

Bosque Grande (Great Forest) is situated in one of the most fertile regions of the West, and as the rich lands bordering on the Pecos River are the objective point of many who intend to settle in the Territory, it was thought best to rid that region of the outlaws first, in order that none might be deterred from settling there. Precautions have been taken which will prevent this refuge of the band from ever sheltering them again.

It was expected that the two other parties would work with Garrett's band, but the Panhandle party were delayed, owing to scarcity of feed, and the White Oaks Rangers had their hands full in another quarter.

The latter party had a brush with Billy, the Kid, Budabaugh, Wilson, and several others at Coyote Springs, near the Oaks camp, and the outlaws succeeded in escaping, although two had their horses shot from under them.

The rangers started back for reinforcements and supplies, and then pressed on after the outlaws, coming upon them at their other station at Greathouse's ranch.

It was night when the rangers reached the ranch. They threw up earthworks a few hundred yards from the stockade of the ranch, and when the outlaws arose in the morning they found themselves hemmed in.

The rangers sent a messenger to Jim Greathouse, the owner of the ranch, demanding the surrender of the outlaws. Greathouse replied in person.

He came out to the camp of the rangers and stoutly asserted that the outlaws had taken possession of his ranch and that he had no power over them nor anything to do with them.

It was considered best to hold Greathouse as a hostage, while Jim Carlyle, the leader of the rangers, acceded to the Kid's request for a conference.

A long time elapsed and Carlyle did not return. His men began to feel uneasy about him, and despatched a note to the renegade chief saying that unless Carlyle was given up in less than five minutes they would kill Greathouse.

Soon after the rangers saw Carlyle leap from the window and dash down the hill toward their intrenchments. He had not gone far, however, when they saw the Kid throw half his body in the window, and, taking deliberate aim, brought down poor Carlyle, killing him instantly.

A sharp fight followed, but the outlaws succeeded in making their escape, Greathouse also getting away during the confusion.

Before leaving for home with the dead body of their leader, the rangers fired everything about the place, and Greathouse, concealed some miles away, saw the smoke of his burning property.

The three parties then began scouting the country, and determined to continue the chase till the country was rid of every one of the outlaws.

Money and outfits were freely offered by men who had large interests in that country. Government officials were interested in the campaign, for, in addition to their other crimes, the outlaws had put in circulation a large quantity of the counterfeit money manufactured by William Brockway, the forger.

The bills were obtained by one of the gang named Doyle, who formerly operated in Chicago, and counterfeit \$100 bills were put in circulation among the stockmen, ranchers and merchants in all that region.

The information that enabled the government officers to fix the handling of counterfeit money upon the Kid's gang came from a freighter named Smith. Soon afterward, while Smith was on his way



JUDGE LYNCH AT WORK IN LAS VEGAS, N. M.



from Les Vegas to Fort Sumner, he was waylaid and murdered by some of the gang.

About three years ago a difficulty arose in Lincoln county, New Mexico, between the stockmen and the Indian agent on the reservation. The trouble arose in regard to some cattle that had been purchased for the Indians.

Nearly every man in the county was under arms, and the troops were called out by Governor Wallace to quell the disturbance. The Kid was mixed up in the affair and had some narrow escapes. On one occasion he was hotly pursued and was obliged to take refuge in a house in Lincoln, which was surrounded by sixty colored soldiers.

To the demand to surrender he only laughed and shot down a soldier just to show that he was game.

The house was set on fire, when the Kid, after loading up his Winchester rifle, leaped from the burning building and made a dash for liberty.

All the while he was running he kept firing his Winchester, bringing down a number of his pursuers. Bullets whistled over his head, but he made his escape, and leaping on a horse was soon laughing at his pursuers.

A few days afterward Gov. Wallace offered a reward of \$500 for Billy the Kid, dead or alive, and a number of the citizens increased that amount to a large sum.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KID'S DESPERATE DEEDS AROUSE THE VENGEANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES—HIS CAPTURE AND DARING ESCAPE—HOW TWO RANGERS BECAME CAPTIVES INSTEAD OF CAPTORS—BILLY'S DEFIANCE OF GOV. WALLACE—CAPTURED AGAIN AND KILLING HIS GUARDS—ONCE MORE AT LIBERTY.

Governor Wallace's reward spurred several ambitious detectives up to attempt the task of capturing the murderous Billy. A posse of seventy-five men started on his trail, and after a long and persevering hunt he was captured and lodged in the Lincoln, N. M., jail. But before his capture was effected the Kid managed to send two or three men to their final home.

On the 18th of April, 1881, Billy was surprised in his hiding-place, about ten miles from Lincoln, by two men, named Hendricks and Wright, who were scouting for him. They learned in some way that a suspicious character had stopped at one of the ranches in the neighborhood, and following up their clue, succeeded in bagging the daring young outlaw.

The two made Billy ride ahead of them. When they got some distance out on the road, he suddenly turned, and drawing a pistol from his pocket, fired twice at Hendricks, who was struck in the left arm and side, and fell from his horse. Then with the quickness of thought he fired at Wright. The ball just skipped his head and knocked his hat off. Wright also fell from his horse, got up and placed himself behind the animal, using it as a breast work, and fired over at Billy, but missed him. In the meantime Hendricks had run away and hid himself behind a log on the roadside. When Wright fired at Billy he adopted the example set him and dismounted, covering himself in the same way, and as it happened that he was riding a larger horse than that of Wright he was better covered.

With astonishing coolness and presence of mind, he forced his horse toward the other until he came alongside. Then he reached over the back of his horse, and pointing the muzzle at Wright, demanded his

weapon. Wright went into a committee of the whole for about two seconds and gave up the gun.

Then came the most remarkable part of the adventure. Covering Wright with his pistol the while, the Kid forced him to mount, and the two rode on as before, except that the positions were reversed—the officer in front and the prisoner behind, holding the key to the situation in the shape of a loaded revolver, cocked and ready in his hand.

One other factor—Hendricks—was lacking in this new departure. The Kid was evidently determined to make a thorough job, and after looking around, discovered that official groaning behind his log. He rode up, and keeping his eye in the meantime on Wright, he interviewed his would-be captor :

"Hello, Hendricks, are you hurt?" he asked in an ironical tone.

"Yes, Billy, you've most killed me," groaned the wounded man.

"Most? well then, G—d d—n you, I'll finish the job," responded Billy, and lowering the muzzle of his pistol he shot the wounded man through the back of the neck, and turning the chamber of his revolver so as to make it ready for service, resumed his way up the road, driving his captive as before.

After proceeding some distance, a well-mounted ranger bore down on them from an angle in the road. Wright began to feel pretty good, and the truant color returned to his pallid cheek. He thought rescue was at hand. He reckoned without his host.

Billy was fully aware of the crisis that must be faced, and rightly chose audacity as the most prudent course.

"Look here," he said to Wright, "if he asks you what the shooting was about tell him we were killing a snake, or"—an eloquent movement of his pistol emphasized and completed the sentence. So when the ranger came up and asked the question, Wright replied that the snakes had been so threatening as to draw forth the fusillade.

When the ranger was out of sight, Billy took an affectionate leave of his prisoner, and disappeared in the woods.

The next day, when Wright had told his story, the people were aroused, and a watch was set on Billy's haunts on the Goodlett place near Crawfordsville. He failed to show up, and the watchers dispersed.

Then a noted scout took the affair in hand. Summoning a posse he surrounded Billy's hiding-place in the dusk and awaited for him to come in. He didn't appear. The next morning the scout came to the

conclusion that his man was already run to earth, and leaving the posse behind took a friend named Frazer, and with him walked to the door of the cabin. With his usual fearlessness the scout stationed Frazer outside and entered the cabin alone. Almost on the instant the report of a pistol rang out, and the scout came staggering out, the blood pouring from his mouth, and crying, "I am shot."

Following close upon him came Billy, who (as the scout fell) fired at Frazer, shooting him in the leg, and then escaped into the woods back of his retreat.

Billy kept on hiding for some time after his escape, and occasionally sent words of defiance to the authorities.

He located at Lincoln, N. M., and a splendid field was afforded to make his name the terror of the inhabitants. He stole, murdered, ravished women, and at one time stole a herd of cattle consisting of 300 head.

He then pocketed the money and went back to Lincoln, and threatened death to any one who would dare attempt to arrest him.

During this time a murder was committed in New Mexico, and Gov. Wallace was positive that Billy had a hand in the deed, but was unable to discover his whereabouts. Finally he learned that he was in the mountains a short distance from Santa Fe, and sent a messenger with a note to the outlaw, saying that if he knew anything about the matter and was willing to give his evidence before the Grand Jury, he would grant him a pardon, providing he also led a different life.

Billy was to meet him at a certain house in Santa Fe, at 12 o'clock on a certain night and date, and the matter would be thoroughly discussed.

At the appointed time Gov. Wallace was at the house, and exactly at 12 o'clock a knock was heard at the door and in walked "Billy the Kid."

A long talk followed, and it was agreed that the sheriff should arrest him to protect him from the pals of the murderer. The Governor's idea in granting a pardon to Billy was to capture the leader and attempt to break up the gang.

On the next day the sheriff with a posse of men captured Billy and he was brought before the Grand Jury, testified, and two of the men were sentenced to be hanged on Billy's evidence.

From the day Billy received the Governor's letter, he led the life



THE END OF BILLY LEROY.



of a murderer, stage robber, etc., and felt that the letter would forever shield him from the law should he be captured.

At length Billy committed one murder too many, was arrested and sentenced to be hanged on the 13th of June, 1881, at Santa Fe.

It was deemed advisable to remove him to Lincoln near Fort Stanton, where he would be more secure from any attempt on the part of his pals to rescue him.

When placed in the jail he warned the authorities that he would make his escape, remarking, "You know that in order to have this hanging a success you must have me there. and I don't intend to be present."

He struck his guard over the head with the heavy shackles that were upon his wrists and then snatching the revolver from the belt of the guard he quickly ended the latter's life with a bullet.

He then coolly walked up to the house, just across the street, where the other guard lived, and picking up a shot-gun, seated himself to await the guard's return. A few moments later the latter, unconscious of any danger, strolled towards the house. A voice called out "Hello, old fellow." The guard looked up and saw Billy the Kid with the gun in his hand. A second later there was a loud report and the guard staggered, dying from a wound in his side. To make sure work Billy sent the contents of the other barrel into the guard's body.

This made the second man he had killed within ten minutes. Dropping the shot-gun he entered a rear room which was used for storing supplies, and armed himself with half a dozen six-shooters, a Winchester repeating rifle and all the amunition he could conveniently carry.

The report of the gun had caused quite a number of people to assemble around the building, and when Billy appeared on the porch every man reached for his pistol. With his Winchester rifle at his side, not raising it to his shoulder, Billy began to shoot and the men began to scatter.

"I am fighting the whole world for my life," said he, "and I mean business." He then ordered one of the men to get him a horse, which he mounted and rode away and for a long time was not seen or heard of.

He next turned up with a gang in the southern part of New Mexico, and gave evidence of his daring by appearing in one of the small towns

and organizing a mass-meeting of outlaws to protest against the vigilance of Gov. Wallace in hunting them down.

Gov. Wallace was noted for his courage, and he would not hesitate to face and attempt to take the most desperate character if it became necessary.

At the meeting over which Billy LeRoy presided, it was decided that as Gov. Wallace had taken such great care in placing a large number of their crowd under arrest that he should be assassinated, when the first opportunity presented itself.

Each man was sworn to this agreement, and a general celebration and jubilee followed at Lincoln over the action of the meeting. The members, some 300 in number, paraded through the streets with cocked guns and revolvers, and the citizens thought it best to look on and not in any way molest the gang.

Somehow or other when the boys got pretty full of whiskey, a streak of goodness entered their hearts, and right in the saloon another meeting was called, and it was resolved that Lew Wallace was a brave man, and only doing his duty. As this was the case, the first resolution was reconsidered, and the following notice sent to Gov. Wallace, which is still in his possession :

"At our first meeting we resolved that you should die for interfering with our crowd, but as we think you a brave man and one who fought for the same cause that we did during the war, therefore we resolved that instead of killing you we will, when the first opportunity presents itself, take off your pants and give you the worst spanking you ever had !"

The Governor said he actually believed that they would carry out their intention, and he was very careful that they shouldn't get an opportunity to spank him if he could help it. A short time after receiving the note he had occasion to cross the country, and he felt that the outlaws would attempt the trick. He felt so certain of this that before he started he gave the driver notice that should any person order the coach to halt, the mules should be whipped into a dead run.

As the coach was descending a deep ditch a couple of men jumped out, and before they had time to sing out, the driver gave the mules the whip and away they dashed down the declivity. The Governor here jocosely remarked "that he didn't know which was the worst—running

the risk of breaking his neck or getting the spanking." Anyhow, they didn't catch him.

After his escape from the Lincoln jail, Billy seems to have become more desperate than ever. He realized that his days were numbered, and determined to make the most of them.

A month after getting his liberty, he rode up to a cow camp of John Chisum's, the well-known cattle man, in the Panhandle, in which there were four cowboys. Three of these were seated around a fire, cooking supper, while the fourth, Bennett Howell, was hobbling his horse, about twenty yards from the fire.

Riding up to the latter, "Kid" inquired, "Are you working for old John Chisum?" "Yes," was the reply.

"Then here's your pay," a bullet from the "Kid's" pistol piercing his brain at the same time.

Seeing the murder of their comrade the other cow boys sprang to their feet, but before they could draw their six-shooters, that of the killer had exploded twice again, and two more of the cowboys fell.

Pulling down on the one remaining, the murderer shouted "Hold up!" The command was promptly obeyed.

"Now," continued Billy, "I want you to take a message to old John Chisum for me. Tell him that during the war he promised to pay me \$5 a day for fighting for him. I fought for him and never got a cent. Now I intend to kill his men wherever I meet them, giving him credit for \$5 every time I drop one, until the debt is squared, or if I happen to meet him before, I'll kill him and call the whole account settled.

"All I am living for now is to get even with my enemies, and I expect to be in this country until I do that."

"The Kid" then rode away toward the Pecos River, and the cowboy, after seeing that his friends were dead, made all haste to the nearest camp, where he told his story and secured assistance to bury the bodies of the murdered men.

Chisum, it will be remembered, was the leader of one of the sides in the bloody war between the Lincoln county cattle men in 1878.

When the trouble broke out Chisum hired the "Kid" as a sort of lieutenant, promising to pay him \$5 a day, as stated. The Kid did valiant work, if you could denominate success as a murderer by such a term, killing several men, it is claimed, on the opposite side.

CHAPTER VIII.

BILLY VISITS MAY VIVIAN—A FATAL MEETING—CAPTURED WHILE MAKING LOVE—HIS BRAVADO WHILE IN THE FACE OF DEATH—JUDGE LYNCH TAKES HIM IN HAND, AND WITH HIS BROTHER HE DECORATES A TREE.

Pushed in every quarter with hundreds of vigilant men on his track, New Mexico became so warm for the Kid that he returned to Colorado, and there the daring young highwaymen met his fate.

May Vivian was living at Del Norte, and Billy, with characteristic recklessness, resolved to pay her a visit.

That resolution cost him his life. While in gentle dalliance with the fair songstress, he was surprised and captured. Arthur, his brother, was taken the same day.

Billy fought his captors like a demon, and but for being seriously wounded would never have permitted himself to be taken alive. As it was, he almost bled to death before he was lodged in jail.

To illustrate the nonchalance of the highwayman, it need only be stated that after a physician had dressed his wounds he acted in as "game" a manner as though he were emptying the pockets of stage coach passengers with his band of desperadoes with him, and for the edification of the medical man and the sheriff sang the following refrain in a clear and musical voice :

Hurrah, o'er the prairies broad to roam,
Hurrah for the stilly hour,
When the moon looks down from her lofty dome,
Like a maid from her battle tower.
When ladies scream, and their gems do glow,
As their pockets we unload,
We cry good night, with a smile and a bow ;
And hurrah, hurrah, for the road !

As soon as he finished he offered to make a bet with the sheriff of a basket of Mumm that he would be out of the "quay," as he termed the



BILLY "THE KID" AND HIS BROTHER ARTHUR POND,
AS THEY APPEARED AFTER BEING LYNCHED AT DEL NORTE, COOL.



jail, and through the Saquache Pass, before the United States Marshals could arrive from Denver.

His brother, on the contrary, seemed to be in depressed spirits.

Five special deputy sheriffs were sworn in and appointed guards to the bandit king, and were locked up in the jail—ranged around his cell in order to guard against any possibility of escape.

The first rumor of LeRoy's capture had spread through the camp like wildfire, and the miners quickly concluded that they would put one desperado out of the way before the mountain robbers could come to the rescue.

A meeting was called in the principal saloon, and before midnight "Judge Lynch" had ordered the death of Billy LeRoy.

The Vigilants numbered over one hundred of the best citizens and miners of Del Norte. They went down to the jail in a body, overpowered the guards, and, going to LeRoy's cell, the leader said :

"Billy, you're sent for."

LeRoy was lying on one elbow in his cell, and, with his customary bravado, replied :

"Really, I feel quite proud of this ovation ; but owing to the lateness of the hour, etc., I must decline."

The door was quickly unlocked, and the captive realizing that a climax equally as lawless as his life was at hand, said :

"Don't be in a hurry, gentlemen, for the more haste the less speed, and too many cooks spoil the broth."

He stood up while the already prepared noose was thrown over his head, and looking down at the coil of sea grass, sarcastically remarked that it was finer than silk.

While the robber chief walked out of the cell with the blood gushing afresh from his wounded limb, his brother was so overcome by the situation that he was as helpless as an infant, and members of the Vigilance Committee were obliged to carry him forth.

"You make me blush," said Billy in a scornful manner, looking at his brother ; "you have been 'called,' so why can't you quit like a man?"

A wagon stood in the jail yard, and placing the doomed men upon it, the Vigilants dragged the wagon down to a clump of trees which stand by the river. A half-dozen lanterns were in the crowd, and by

the light LeRoy could see that several of the self-constituted executioners carried revolvers ready drawn.

"Put up your guns," he cried in his ringing voice ; "I shan't harm a hair on your heads."

The wagon came to a halt under a large projecting limb, and it was but the work of a minute to throw the loose end of each rope over the limb and knot it securely. Then the leader asked in solemn tones :

"Have either of you men anything to say?"

Billy looked at his brother, who was too weak to speak, and then, as if courting a pistol shot, answered :

"Talk is cheaper than town lots in Aspen. Some men are known by the deeds that live after them, and I am one of that number.

"I have 'held up' many a stage, and have sent a few men who were too officious prospecting in another land where the diggings are reported richer than anything in Colorado. Remove this necktie, take off my handcuffs, and give me a show."

He looked about him with a defiant air for ten seconds, and then, as if realizing that his death was to be by hanging, concluded by saying :

"I have waltzed through this region a long time without paying the fiddler ; so now, gentlemen, I am ready to meet the cashier. Go on with your cart."

Strong hands laid hold of the wagon, it was dragged forward a few feet, and two bodies were left dangling in the air.

A few minutes later a man called at the Coroner's residence and, summoning that official to the window, cried out :

"Coroner, there are two stiffs for you down here in a tree where this street strikes the river, and here are the keys to the jail that I just found in the street."

The keys were deftly thrown through the window, and when that official visited the clump of trees indicated, he found the lifeless remains of Billy LeRoy and his brother.

LeRoy was never outwitted but once. It was in November, 1879, and the scene was in Weston Pass Road, near Rocky Ranch, nine miles below Leadville.

In the coach were seven gentlemen and one lady. At intervals during the day road agents had been the topic of discussion, and the lady

passed the remark that all the money she possessed was tucked safely away in her left overshoe.

It looked as though the journey would be made in safety, when the stage stopped and the driver cried through the boot:

"For heaven's sake keep quiet and don't shoot!"

The next moment there was a word of command, and a murderous looking revolver, at full cock, appeared at one of the windows, and the woman screamed in true feminine fashion. The door was opened and a slight form, the face concealed by a domino and black felt hat, appeared.

"Step out, please," said the owner, blandly; "toll must be paid up all pilgrims at this point."

"Hands up," said the voice again as the first passenger stepped out, "and be lively, too, for I haven't shot a man since yesterday, and I am aching to get in practice again!"

All were arraigned in line in the snow, and the boyish looking leader first searched a newspaper correspondent. The first thing he found was a railroad press pass, and scanning it for a moment, the bandit said:

"I always respect the press; I am Billy LeRoy, and I ask you to let me down easy."

All were examined except the lady and a gentleman at her left, and little money was found.

"Beg pardon, Miss," said LeRoy, as he rifled her pockets.

As the road agent turned to the remaining passenger, the latter said:

"I haven't got over \$25 to my name, but if you'll let me go I'll tell you where you can get over \$400."

LeRoy had already found the passenger's pocketbook, and, as it was not heavily laden, replied:

"Well, fire away; it's a bargain."

"In the left overshoe of the woman," answered the tell-tale.

Despite the woman's protestations her shoe was removed and the money appropriated. Then orders were given to return to the stage; they were obeyed, and in a few moments the stage was bowling rapidly away from the eventful spot.

An indignation meeting was immediately held, and it was suggested

that the passenger who had betrayed the lady should either be lynched or thrown out of the stage to perish in the snow.

"Allow me to utter a word of explanation," said the brute in a suave tone at this point. "I am the agent for a St. Louis company who have purchased an interest in the Pendry group of mines at Leadville, and in my valise I carry \$60,000 of the purchase money. The expressage on so great a sum of money is so heavy that I thought it safe to adopt this method of carrying it through. I knew very well that if the robber found nothing he would search our baggage, and so played the role of informant and outwitted him."

On arriving at Leadville the lady, who proved to be Mrs. Winnie Purdy, was presented with \$1,000 by the agent.

After the bodies of Billy and his brother were left dangling on the tree some one pinned a paper on Billy's coat on which were these words:

ROAD AGENTS, BUNKO STEERERS

AND

HORSE THIEVES,

B E W A R E ! !

The warning proved ominous for the rest of his gang. Both Jim Wilson and Tom O'Phallier were both killed while attempting to rob a stage a short distance from Leadville.

After hanging twenty-four hours, the bodies of Billy and his brother were cut down, and the following verdict rendered by the coroner at Del Norte:

STATE OF COLORADO, }
County of Rio Grande, } ss.

At an inquisition holden at Del Norte, in the said county and State aforesaid, on the 23d day of May, A. D., 1881, before L. T. Holland, Coroner, upon the bodies of Arthur Pond, alias Billy LeRoy, and Sam Potter, (upon whose right arm was tattooed the letters "S. P." from which, and the great resemblance between the two men, the jury believe them to be brothers,) there lying dead, by the persons whose names

are hereunto subscribed, the said jurors on their oaths, do say, that said persons above named and described, came to their death by hanging, at the hands of a large party of disguised men, who kidnapped and confined L. M. Armstrong, sheriff of said county and Deputy U. S. Marshal, and who also overpowered the guards in the jail, after having taken by force from said Deputy U. S. Marshal the keys of the jail and cells. Said party of disguised men the jury are unable to identify from the evidence or otherwise. We, the jury, further find that no blame whatever attaches to Mr. Armstrong or any of the guards who were in the immediate charge of said prisoners.

Before his death LeRoy spoke of his escape from Sam Cantril on the Kansas Pacific railroad, while being taken to the Detroit house of correction, the particulars of which are as follows :

LeRoy stated that while in the Pueblo jail he was shackled with a "new-fangled shackle" that unlocked with a key. He figured upon the situation awhile, and found he could unlock these shackles with a watch spring, which fact was discovered by the guards, and he was shackled with the "old-fashioned shackle," which unlocked with a wrench.

LeRoy stated that he manufactured a wrench with a piece of wire, which unlocked his shackles nicely, and he proceeded to hide the wrench by pushing it under the skin on the under side of his left arm, between the elbow and shoulder. He was taken to Denver, stripped, and the wrench was not discovered, and with this wrench under his arm he left for Detroit.

While Cantril was in the wash room, LeRoy said he used this wrench to unlock his shackles, and jumped from the train while the same was moving at the rate of thirty miles an hour. He was stunned by the leap, but soon recovered himself sufficiently to skip back to Hayes City, where he lay under a house for two days.

During the time when LeRoy was in the vicinity of Hayes City, evading the officers of the law, he stated that he subsisted for three days upon one ear of corn.

There is a discrepancy in his story as to whether he went East or West from Hayes City, but it is generally believed that he went to Iowa, remained a short time, and enticed his brother to go West with him and enter into the "hold-up" business.

Billy LeRoy also stated that no blame should be attached to

Marshal Cantril for his escape from the cars, as Cantril was entirely innocent of any complicity in the matter.

When arrested, LeRoy had a 38 calibre "Bull-dog" pistol on his person. It was a small pocket edition. When surprise was manifested by some of the guards that he should attempt a highway business with so small a pistol as the one used by him, he said:

"A corn-cob is just as good as a pistol to hold up a coach with."

When told of the probabilities of being lynched, the robbers said they had no word to send to relatives, but would make the best of a bad job.

Sam Potter, or Pond, said: "Any man who will follow stage robbing for a business is none too good to be hung."

The day following the hanging, the corpses, stiff as crowbars, in Zulu costume, were balanced against the outside of the jail and photographed as they appear in this book.

Adios—

BILLY LEROY, THE KING OF AMERICAN HIGHWAYMEN.

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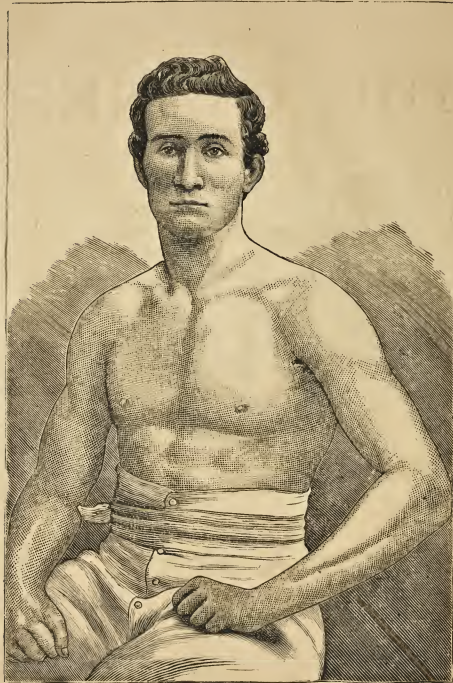
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